Following social capital: its formation, mobilization and maintenance in two Vietnamese housing upgrading projects

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A thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

at

Lincoln University

by

Thuy Nguyen

Lincoln University

2017

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Social capital theory has been adopted in urban governance studies to promote democracy and inclusion through processes of communities' active citizenship and political participation. The meaning and approach of defining social capital in relation to urban governance issues still remain ambiguous. Social capital's theoretical application seems to remain elastic. This thesis set out with a general objective to critically examine how social capital operates in a local collective and community-based process. Specifically, the study utilizes the categorization of social capital dimensions as bonding, bridging and linking relations to explore how these social relation dimensions were formed, mobilized and maintained in a community-based housing upgrading process. To achieve its objectives, the study employs two qualitative case studies of community-based housing upgrading projects of the Asian Coalition of Community Action Programme in Vietnam: the Friendship housing project in Vinh city and Binh Dong 1 housing project in Tan An city. The research therefore seeks to both confirm the applicability of such social capital concepts in the Vietnam context and explore particularly aspects of the formation, mobilisation and maintenance of these types of social capital in these projects.

The study findings suggest a framework that allows a synesthetic understanding of the operation of social capital regarding its components (trust, cooperation, other behavioural norms), levels (individuals, communities, network, state), formation approach (civil society or state-centred) and the interrelation of social capital dimensions (bonding, bridging and linking). Such a social capital operation framework necessitates multi-levels of societal resources in the formation of social capital. In addition, it accentuates the internal and contextual operation of key social capital components (i.e., trust, cooperation, attitudinal behaviours). Insights into a mixed approach of social capital formation are provided; they move beyond the dichotomy of civil-society and the state. The study draws attention to the interrelationship among bonding, bridging and linking capitals, raising a question regarding the hybrid nature of social capital dimensions. In addition, the study emphasizes

that the mobilization of bonding, bridging and linking capital is interdependent and adaptable, and that the maintenance of social capital is unpredictable because conditions enabling social capital to form, or generate, are uncertain, being both conditional and unstable. Overall, the study concludes on a holistic approach to the formation, mobilization and maintenance of social capital within and between bonded, bridged and linked groups of such projects within the Vietnamese context and perhaps elsewhere.

Keywords: bonding, bridging, community participation, civil-society, linking, local governance, housing upgrading, network, social capital, social capital formation, social capital mobilization, social capital maintenance, state, urban poor community, urban goverments.

Acknowledgements

I'm grateful for this opportunity where I can take a deep breath and acknowledge all those who have got me to this point. Thank you New Zealand, the NZAid scholarship programme and Lincoln University, which have given me the chance to study and live here for the past four and a half years. The wonderful life experience that I have had confirms I made the right decision to come here.

Thank you to my supervisors. Thanks to Associate Professor Hamish Rennie for always being there for my questions and concerns. Your broad intellect, academic experience and, more importantly, your kind-hearted support have encouraged me much along the journey. Thank you for taking along my drafts with you on overseas fieldtrips and on your leave, and your late nights working on my thesis. I was so fortunate to have you any time I need, especially on the final days before the thesis submission. I would also like to thank Dr Roy Montgomery for co-supervising me in the first years. Thank you for your time and inputs to my work, even though you had many other commitments. Thanks to Dr Suzanne Vallance for coming on board and the constructive critical comments that guided me to focus and tell a more straightforward and meaningful story. I also really appreciate your sharing as a mother who also has to juggle between family and work. Thanks to Dr Michael Mackay for your time and feedback on my work. Thank you for reassuring me of the value of my PhD study, which encouraged me to continue the tough journey. I would also like to thank Stephen Espiner for your support. Even though, I have never had a direct meeting with you, you were always understanding and supportive. I also wish to thank my master supervisors, Dr Wim Blaw and Maria Zwanenburg, at the Institute of Housing studies, Erasmus University, the Netherlands. They helped me to set the foundation for my post graduate studies and unconditionally support my application for the PhD position.

I would like to thank all the management and administrative staff of Lincoln University for your support during my study. Thanks to Sue Bowie and Jayne Borril for your hugs, encouragement and actions to address various problems I faced. Thanks to Megan Clayton for understanding and helping all us Phd students to overcome our different challenges. Thanks also to Michael Douglas, Tracey Shields, Michelle Collings, Alison Hind and other ESD faculty's administrative staff for your support in addressing administrative issues, especially the provision of a working space and field trip procedures. Appreciation is also due to the Library, Teaching and Learning department for the continuous help and useful workshops. I, especially, want to thank Caitriona Cameron for your kind-hearted help that was crucial to improve my writing skills. Thanks to Craig Nicholson and Sarah Tritt for your drop-in sessions to address my thesis issues, and to IT team for responding promptly to my technical requests. I would also like to give my appreciation to the Chaplain members: Glenda, Ani, Trevor, for your care and support to international students.

Thanks to the LINC team 2014-2016. The experience of working in a university environment and the inputs from examiners and tutor colleagues were invaluable and constructive. Even though the job was not directly related to my PhD study, it helped me widen my knowledge, improve my team work and teaching skills, all of which are part of what a PhD study aims to achieve. Above all, I had the chance to know other colleagues with whom I could share my challenges, my traditional food, listen to their stories, and so much more. Thank you Angela, Caroline, Cherry, Dean, Marcel, Mary, John, Kathrin, Noelani, and Shannon. Thank you for thinking about me and my progress along the PhD journey.

Thanks to my friends who have been an important part of my study life. Especially, I want to thank Caroline Depatie and your family for the kindness, compassion and fun that you showed me and my daughter Thuy Anh during your time in Lincoln. Caroline, thanks for your message from Canada when I was facing challenging times. It cheered me up and made me understand that the pressure that I had was nothing compared with others. Thanks also to Anita Streat and your family, Suni, and Annie for your offers and willingness to have my daughter when I needed the time. It is great to see the kids get along well and have so much fun together. Thanks to Lincoln primary school, the staff and Thuy Anh's friends for the learning space that gave me the ease to focus on my study.

My great thanks to Vietnamese friends: Nhung, anh Cuong, chu thim Truyen, Truyen, co Lan, chu Anh, co Thao, chu Minh, Quang, Nhan, chi Van, chi Nga, Mai, Nha, Dung, anh Hung, Phuong, anh Nam, Ha, anh Thanh, Long, Nghia, Thai, Phuc, Hannah, Kim, Jin for your support and help at all stages of my study, from when we first came to New Zealand until our final weeks here. The joy of going on hiking trips, cooking our traditional food, organizing community activities, your help with my daughter, my house and my bicycles, your smiles and saying hi… All have contributed the building blocks for my life in Lincoln.

I'm also grateful to our international friends that we have met in New Zealand. Rashid and his family, Vivian, Melanie, Susan, Marta, John, Russel and the Operational Friendship team members, Lorna, Scott, Allister, Toby, and many others. Thank you for the time with us and the fun activities organized. Thanks are also due to Wolfgang and Christine for the visits, the love and care that you gave us. I also want to specially thank my friends Paul and Evelyn for your unlimited help, the adventures around the country, your stories and gatherings that have become unforgettable memories of our life in New Zealand. Thanks to my office mates, Zohre, Shoep, Eva, Kathy, and many others for your chats and sharing the study space.

Especially, I want to thank Diana Lapagge, John Gould and John Larocco for your help in reading my thesis. It was very helpful and released so much of my worries. I really appreciate your friendship and

willingness to help. Thanks to Eric Scott for your efficient editing service in coping with my time lines and giving me useful suggestions.

I would also like to thank all those connected with ACVN and its projects for providing inspirational experiences prior to commencing my Phd and for their cooperation during this research. My great thanks are also expressed to staff members of the housing projects, the city governments and residents of the research case studies. The completion of my Phd is largely thanks to your unconditional support and help during and after my field trips. For the autonomous reason of the study, I can't list your names here but I'm sure I don't miss any of your names in my heart.

Last but not least, I'm grateful to my family. Thanks to my daughter Thuy Anh for your being with me in New Zealand. You were so little when you came here, but bravely adapted into the new environment. Now you know to prepare meals and take care of yourself whenever Mum is too busy with her work. Thank you for the yummy Saturday pan cakes, the flute music every morning, your treatment to my health problems with ice packs or hot water bottles, the cards, the loving hands, the gifts, and so so many more things you have given me. I thank to my parents, sister, brother and their families, who have always supported me in whatever way they can to get me where I am today. Thanks to Thuy Anh's father and his family for letting Thuy Anh go with me, and thinking about us along the way.

I might have missed to mention many others who have contributed to my study journey. Without you, I cannot have completed my Phd study. Thank you all for your being part of that.

With appreciation and love,

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Abbreviation

ACVN	Association of Cities of Vietnam
ACCA	Asian Coalition of Community Actions
ACHR	Asian Coalition of Housing Rights
ADB	Asian Development Bank
BTC	Belgium Technical Cooperation
CDF	Community Development Fund
ENDA	Environment and Development in Action
HCMC	Ho Chi Minh City
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
ODA	Official Development Assistance
Tan An CDF	Tan An's Community Development Fund
UNDP	United Nation Development Programs
UNESCAP	The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific of the United Nations
Un-Habitat	United Nation Human Settlements Programme
Vinh CDF	Vinh's Community Development Fund
VNCDF	Vietnamese Community Development Fund
VUF	Vietnam Urban Forum
VWU	Vietnamese Women’s Union
WB	World Bank

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Global urban slum issues and upgrading policies

Poor housing - a world urban phenomenon – is neither a novel problem nor limited to any particular group of countries (Mukhija, 2001; Al-Nammari, 2013; Andavarapu & Edelman, 2013). However, the problem is particularly urgent in highly urbanizing areas[1] such as Asia, Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States (UN-Habitat, 2014; United Nations, 2016). Such a prevailing challenge features issues of "squatter settlements, unauthorized land development and dilapidated houses in city centre areas" (Durand-Lasserve & Royton, 2002, p. 3). The challenge, thereby, seems to be an inevitable "growing pain" of economic development that needs to be faced[2] (Isunju et al., 2011, p. 369). Nowadays, despite the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) achievements, about one fourth of the world's urban population, and one-third of developing city-dwellers live in slums (United Nations, 2016). In Asia, illegal settlements are usually cited as "part of the sum and substance of cities in the South" (Milbert, 2006, p. 300). Though much national economic growth and progressive urban development has been achieved, positive outcomes have not always been witnessed for the urban poor (Boonyabancha & Mitlin, 2012). One possible reason is that uncontrolled growth has "outstripped most developing cities' capacity to provide adequate basic services for their citizens" (Cohen, 2006, p. 64). Consequently, informal settlements have become accommodation solutions for the poor urban population. These housing areas are often legally and/or physically insecure because of insufficient basic infrastructure, high density and lack of residential status (Roy 2005). The 'normality' of its occurrence means poor urban housing remains problematic, especially for developing countries, in the search for economic development that is beneficial for all members of society.

To address the issue of poor housing quality, a proliferation of formal upgrading programmes has been pursued by development agencies and governments to manage informal settlements (Smolka & Larangeira, 2008). Adopted policies range from demolition, resettlement, formalization, to in-situ upgrading of slum areas (Wirlin, 1999; AlSayyad, 2004; Roy, 2005; Dasgupta & Beard, 2007; Wirlin,

[1] More than half of the world population is estimated to live in urban areas (UN-DESA, 2014).
[2] Globally, since 1990, 213 million slum dwellers have been added to the global population (UN-Habitat, 2013, 2015). The figure increased from 650 million (in 1990) to 760 (in 2000) and currently is estimated to be nearly one billion (UN-Habitat, 2015)

2010; Wekesa et al., 2011; Andavarapu & Edelman, 2013). In parallel, participatory approaches have been extensively promoted by formal institutions (mainly international development entities and national governments) as the panacea for efficient, effective urban upgrading (Nguyen, 2009). However, upgrading efforts still seem to fail to effectively address urban slum issues. Implemented upgrading programmes have been criticized for shortcomings such as the "aestheticization" of poverty; a heavy focus on physical construction; breaking up of long-established social structures; and inadequate consideration of the poor's ability to participate in loan schemes and housing property markets (Roy, 2005; Pow, 2007; Bhan, 2009; Wekesa et al., 2011; Boonyabancha & Mitlin, 2012; Andavarapu & Edelman, 2013).

1.2 Community based upgrading networks

In response to the formidable challenges of urban poor housing, especially since the 1990s, emerging upgrading approaches, particularly in developing countries, have advocated "engaging slum residents, and their relations with political leaders" to effectively address urban slum issues (Moksnes & Melin, 2014, pp. 3-4; see also, Satterthwaite et al., 2011). These upgrading approaches are normally followed by alliances of poor communities, activists and practitioners (Leonhardt, 2012). In this thesis, these alliances are called community-based urban upgrading networks. These networks are considered a part of the local – global activism (locally rooted but internationally networked) emerging as a new phenomenon of a transnational pro-poor housing movement that promotes a people-driven development agenda (Ley et al., 2016). These networks appear to be based on some important global events such as the delivery of UN-Habitat's Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements in 1996[3] and the launching of the City Alliance's "City without slum" action plan in 1999[4]. They challenge conventional participatory urban slum upgrading for largely prioritizing physical improvement with little effort to engage the urban poor in developing upgrading solutions (Pow, 2007; Bhan, 2009; Boonyabancha & Mitlin, 2012). Following such a mandate, the Asian Coalition of Housing Rights (ACHR) declared its establishment in 1988 and, in 2009, initiated the Asian Coalition of Community Actions' programme (ACCA) that promotes a pro-poor, community-based upgrading approach (Leonhardt, 2012). By November 2014, the programme had been active in 215 cities in 19 Asian countries (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2014, p. 1). Pro-poor housing upgrading projects (ACCA housing projects) belong to the "big housing projects" component of the

[3] The UN-Habitat's declaration proposes the inauguration of community based organizations, civil society organizations and other forms of non-governmental entities to bolster poverty reduction and human settlement quality improvement (The Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, 1996)

[4] The City Alliance's action plan promotes global partnerships on sustainable and inclusive cities in coping with rapidly changing demographic trends; the action plan, in fact, formed the MDG Target 11 (City Alliance website, 2016).

programme's four key components (see Chapter 4). The ACCA "big housing projects" implemented in Vietnam are the focus of my research. They started in 2009 and were implemented by the Vietnam Community Development Fund network (VNCDF). In 2013, VNCDF reported to have successfully implemented a number of ACCA housing projects based on the collective actions of local communities in partnership with local government. This phenomenon triggered a need to further explore how these initiatives were realized in the context of Vietnam – a country that is not open to "neither political pluralism nor individual criticism of public policies" (Carpenter et al., 2004, p. 536). Insights into how the ACCA housing projects mobilized social capital and the collective efforts of local communities in upgrading poor housing areas are important to understand the relationship between the civil society and the state in Vietnam that, equally asserted in the same study (ibid), might change faster than it is generally perceived. The background of Vietnam socio-political conditions and information about ACHR, ACCA and VNCDF are presented in detail in Chapter 4.

1.3 Social capital theory

Underpinning the call for more community based housing development is a belief that social relations may provide important resources that can be mobilised to achieve social and economic change for the poor, particularly in urban areas. This relies in part on social capital theory (see for instance, DeFilippis, 2001). As Ostrom & Ann (2009, pp. 24-25) suggests, although aspects of collective action can be investigated without "resorting to the concept of social capital", social capital in several contexts is useful "to unravel puzzles" because it allows a synthesized approach to see how communities' collective efforts are affected by their cultural, social and institutional conditions. Historically, social capital is stated to originate from the time of Aristotle, Tocqueville, Durkheim and Marx, featuring the thought of these thinkers about the importance of relationships and mutual aid (Cannone, 2009, p.40). In the early 20th century, the term "social capital" was first introduced in sociological disciplines by Hanifan (1916, p.130) as the accumulation of contacts between one person and his, or her, different neighbours. The concept was revisited by other scholars such as exchange theorists Hoffman and Maier (1961); urban scholar Jacobs (1961); Canadian urban sociologists Seeley et al., (1958), and Loury (1977). Generally, these authors conceptualize social capital as the "status" that individuals accrued or lent as a result of their group activities (see Farr, 2004, p.9).

Social capital theory eventually expanded rapidly after the late 1980s with the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1980, 1986) and James Coleman (1988, 1990). Interest in social capital "took off" both academically and politically in the early 1990s with the work of Putnam (1993a, 1993b, 1995, 2000), followed by many supporters and critics. So far, social capital theory has been applied and explored

in different fields of studies from Anthropology to Political Science, Sociology to Human Geography (Coleman 1988, Portes, 1998; Fukuyama 2001; Häkli & Minca, 2009). The proliferation of social capital definitions, nevertheless, seems to cause much confusion, perhaps because of the multifaceted discussions about different aspects of social capital including levels, components, formation approaches, and relation dimensions (bonding, bridging, and linking). Social capital levels are discussed in terms of micro or individual level, community level and macro (region or nation) level. Seminal authors advocating the micro level of social capital are Bourdieu (1980, 1986) and Coleman (1988, 1990). Both authors similarly define social capital as first inherited from the family, and eventually constituted through social networks and relationships. The difference between Bourdieu and Coleman is that Bourdieu (1980, 1986) emphasizes individual possession of social capital and Coleman (1988) highlights the existence of social capital in the relationships among people. Micro level social capital, according to Lin (1999), is human capital that aggregates to benefit the collective. Community level social capital is developed by Putnam (1993a), who draws on Coleman's ideas clarifying that social capital is not a property of individuals or institutions but self-reinforces and accumulates from the spaces between them; such a common resource enables citizens to pursue their self-interest within a framework of the broader public interest. Putnam (ibid) identifies key social capital components as generalized trust, norms of cooperation or reciprocity, and networks. This set of social capital components influentially guides subsequent studies that continuously seek to clarify the meaning of each component and the correlations among them (Woolcock & Narayan 2000; Hooghe & Stolle, 2003; Farr, 2004; Adger, 2003; Nyamori et al, 2012). Among the components, trust has been much discussed as featuring shared norms of cooperation and psychological capacities that facilitate associations, activities, or relations that bring people together as a community (Farr, 2004; Ostrom, 2007, Häkli & Minca, 2009). At the macro level (nations), social capital has been examined in relation to impacts of "social control and social trust" on effective governance and improved social structures (Fukuyama, 1995; Zhao, 2014, p. 81).

Social capital theory has, in addition, witnessed the emergence of contrasting approaches in examining how social capital is formed: the civil-society centred approach and the state-centred approach. The former considers social capital and its components to originate from civic associations to nurture both democratic politics and economic prosperity (Coleman, 1988, 1990), or to promote political and economic performance (Putnam, 1993a; Fukuyama, 1999). The state-centred approach claims that state agencies should not be neglected and social capital flourishes only if it is embedded in and linked to formal political and legal institutions (Tarrow 1996; Berman 1997; Levi 1998; Hall 1999; Lowndes & Wilson, 2001; Rothstein & Stolle 2002; Häkli & Minca, 2009). In addition, a mixed or synergy approach that identifies the role of both the state and civil society in generating social

capital has been proposed. Such an approach has been examined in the area of political economy and new institutional economics (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000), and community based urban regeneration programmes (Bevir & Rhodes, 2003; Kearns, 2003; Bull & Jones, 2006; Archer, 2010a, 2010b, Minnery et al., 2013).

Some branches of scholarship have equally sought a better understanding of the distinguishable social capital dimensions, namely bonding, bridging and linking. These categories are acknowledged to be "the most promising developments in social capital theory" because they enable "a more complex and robust re-theorization of how social capital components (trust, networks and social norms) intertwine" (Füzer & Monostori, 2012, p. 32). "Bonding relations", largely known as social capital's internal ties, feature cohesive characteristics that engage in the pursuit of collective goals within a collective group (Putnam, 1993b; Gittell & Vidal, 1998; Putnam, 1995). "Bridging" social capital refers to the external horizontal dimension of relationships that "tie a focal actor to the others outside of the social network" (Adler & Kwon, 2002, p. 19). A recent study indicates that bridging relations are "most tangibly manifested in civil organizations" and feature generalized trust as the "sine qua non" of the association (Füzer & Monostori, 2012, p. 61). "Linking" social capital, the third dimension of external social capital, is suggested by Woolcock (2001, pp 10-11) to "connect different levels of power and social status".

1.4 Social capital in community-based urban upgrading networks

In urban governance, particularly urban slum upgrading, the promotion of social capital has been advocated as essential for more effective community participation in urban upgrading (Galuszka, 2014; Moksnes & Melin, 2014). Such coexistence of participation and social capital enhancement largely refers to the concept of "empowerment" that considers trust and participation hand in hand with the even distribution of power and resources (Devine-Wright et al., 2001; Mott, 2004; Bull & Jones, 2006). Following this call, community-based urban upgrading networks (introduced above), in challenging conventional participatory approaches, stimulate the shift from government or donor-led development to people-centred solutions, or community-led upgrading, that claim the potential of slum residents and involve them in the development process (Galuszka, 2014, p. 1; Moksnes & Melin, 2004). Several lines of evidence have examined the role of social connections among slum residents and between slum communities and decision makers to improve the effectiveness of slum upgrading solutions (Sen, 1998; Patel & Mitlin, 2004; D'Cruz & Satterthwaite, 2005; Roy, 2005; Sengupta & Sharma, 2012; Andavarapu & Edelman, 2013). These social connections and relationships feature horizontal linkages among the urban poor and vertical relations between poor communities and external stakeholders (Archer, 2012a; Boonyabancha & Mitlin, 2012; Sengupta &

Sharma, 2012), respectively, reflecting social capital theory's concepts of bonding, bridging and linking relations. These relationships have been examined as aspects such as "trust, reciprocity, and cooperation within community networks" (Blokland & Savage, 2008, p. 6); the role of experience, exchange and information sharing networks of poor communities (D'Cruz & Mudimu, 2013); and the empowerment of disadvantaged communities by strengthening mutual trust and partnerships between communities, local government and voluntary associations (Archer, 2010b; Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2012; Natakun, 2013; Vilar & Cartes, 2016).

The above introduces the attempts at community-based urban upgrading networks in mobilizing social capital to address urban slum issues. These attempts provide insights into the concept of community participation advocated by the growing citizenship literature (Robins et al., 2008). As discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.3, the challenge lies in the extensive scepticism shown by critics of the effectiveness of participatory arrangements found in studies of past decades (Gaventa, 2004). The drawbacks of participatory approaches include, among others, the usually narrow and functional project approach with defined enterprises; quantifiable costs and benefits; limited time and budgets; complexity of targeted issues; obstacles of national, social, economic and institutional frameworks; the capacity of participation organizers (including government and civic organizations); and local structure diversity (see Kaufman, 1997; Peck & Tickell, 2002; Gaventa, 2004; Jones, 2003; Nguyen, 2009; Varol et al., 2011; Sengupta & Sharma, 2012). These prevailing challenges faced by community participation suggest attention is needed to conditions that may influence the generation of social capital in a participatory process.

1.5 Theoretical gap

Taken together, the above briefly describes the multifaceted discussions about social capital theory. A dominant argument found in social capital literature is that social capital enables the achievement of certain outcomes collectively that would otherwise have been difficult to achieve individually (Woolcock, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan 2000; Adger, 2003; Nyamori et al, 2012). However, a problem with the existing body of research on social capital is possibly that there has been little direct focus on elaborating in detail the formation process of each social capital component and dimensions (Blokland & Savage, 2008; Füzer & Monostori, 2012; Lewandowski, 2012). With respect to debates on social capital formation approaches, although the literature might show an increasing agreement on a mixed approach combining the role of both the state and civil society in generating social capital, there seems to be a lack of clarity about the conditions under which this approach plays a role. A framework that allows a full understanding about multifaceted aspects of social capital and their relationship is seemingly needed.

With respect to the issues of local governance (i.e., urban upgrading practices), there seems to be a lack of work that has fully examined the internal operation of social capital in community-based upgrading networks (see Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones, 2002; Nyamori et al., 2012). Most studies appear to be undertaken from the view of social networks and social movement organizations, which treat civil-society networks as "either a measure of social capital or resources that offer the opportunities to gain knowledge, contacts, etc" (Diani, 2003; Diani & McAdam, 2003; Blockland & Savage, 2008, p. 173). Challenges in organizing community participation require further insights into how concepts of social capital elaborate in a community based process. The presence of a successful theory on social capital that "links aspects of civic life and trust at the micro and macro level", suggested by Rothstein & Stolle (2002, p. 28), seems to remain a challenge.

In summary, the main gaps in knowledge of the relationship of social capital to urban poor housing upgrading require further study to understand the conditions under which social capital formation, mobilization and maintenance occur in community-based initiatives.

1.6 Research objectives and question

As introduced earlier, my study is prompted by the practical context of the prevailing urban poor housing issue and the suggestion that social capital can be used as a resource to solve a complex local governance problem. Given the existing gaps in social capital theory, as discussed above, the study set out with a general objective to critically examine how social capital operates in a local collective, community-based housing upgrading initiative. To achieve this general objective, the study followed the suggestion that bonding, bridging and linking promise a useful way to robustly re-theorize how social capital components intertwine (see, for instance, Füzer & Monostori, 2012) and addresses the following specific objectives:

1. To explore how social capital is formed in a community-based housing upgrading process by identifying the levels, components and formation approach of social resources within each dimension of bonding, bridging and linking relations.

2. To explore how social capital is mobilized, or used, in a community-based housing upgrading process by identifying the role and relationship of social resources within each dimension of bonding, bridging and linking relations.

3. To explore how social capital is maintained in a community-based housing upgrading process by identifying the conditions under which social resources are maintained within each dimension of bonding, bridging and linking relations.

Through meeting these objectives, my study sought to seek a response to the questions regarding how bonding, bridging and linking relations are formed, mobilized and maintained and how the relationships between the three social capitals affects their formation, mobilization and maintenance. The study sought also to confirm the utility of using such concepts in the socio-political context of Vietnam, which can be characterised since Doi Moi as transitioning from a centralised to a market-based economy. In addressing these objectives, my study focusses on exploring the ways in which social capital is formed, mobilised and maintained in two Vietnamese urban housing project communities: Friendship neighbourhood in Vinh city (northern central Vietnam) and Binh Dong 1 neighbourhood in Tan An city (Mekong Delta, southern Vietnam). These case study communities are taken as representing two different types of urban housing upgrading contexts common in Vietnam: a state-owned collective housing area established under the former centralized economy in the northern part of Vietnam and an illegal squatter area along the canal system in a southern city.

1.7 Outline of the thesis

The research is presented in nine chapters including this introduction. Chapter Two critically reviews the literature on social capital and the meaning of social capital in community-based upgrading networks. Chapter Three describes the research methodology adopted. Chapter Four presents the national and local context of the research's case studies. Chapters Five, Six and Seven present the results based on the three social capital dimensions: bonding, bridging and linking. Chapter Eight discusses the research implications in relation to existing knowledge and literature. Chapter Nine provides the conclusions and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews social capital theory and its application to studies of community-based urban upgrading. The chapter begins with a general introduction to social capital theory and then examines the concept in relation to notions of community participation and community-based urban upgrading networks. Next, the chapter identifies and discusses gaps in social capital theory, particularly those relevant to analysis of urban housing upgrading. Because this research focuses on urban upgrading issues, the review of the social capital literature in this chapter draws mainly on the literature on urban governance.

2.2 Social capital

Social capital, is described by Onyx & Bullen (2000, p. 24) as an important but slippery concept because although it "refers to basic raw material of civil society, it has been poorly defined". Since the 1980s, social capital theory has attracted academic and political concern; the concept is generally understood to be a dense interlocking of networks of relationships between individuals and groups, to which no single player has exclusive ownership (Putnam, 1993a, 1993b; Portes, 1998; Woolcock, 1998; Adler & Kwon, 2002; Farr, 2004). Nevertheless, the literature on social capital theory still features much confusion and multifaceted discussions about different aspects of social capital, such as levels, components, formation approaches, and relation dimensions (bonding, bridging, and linking). The following section examines the multiple aspects of social capital.

2.2.1 The level and components of social capital

Social capital theory encapsulates studies about the use of social capital by different societal levels including the micro level (individuals), community level (neighbourhoods, religious groups, etc.), and the regional and macro level (countries) (Zhao, 2014). This section, therefore, aims to review discussion about the meaning of social capital as a resource for a particular societal level as opposed to questioning if social capital is formed by resources from these societal levels.

The individual level of social capital was strongly advocated by Bourdieu (1980), who, according to Cannone (2009, p. 40), was the first author to explore "the concept in more depth" after the "rather weak and provisional conceptualization of previous authors including Hanifan (1916) and Jacobs

(1961) (see chapter 1 for more information about the development history of the social capital concept). Bourdieu's social capital means networks and contacts that are "first inherited from the family and then accumulated through labour" (Cannone, 2009, p. 41). To Bourdieu (1980), the social capital concept helps to explain the dissimilar social positions that individuals achieve; though individuals start with the same level of economic and cultural capital, a different capacity to mobilize resources from their networks of acquaintances leads to their different social positions. The capacity to mobilize resources as meant by Bourdieu was clarified by Cannone (2009, p. 43) to be "the result of a dynamic and relational process and as the consequence of an endless institutional endeavour aimed at creating and maintaining durable and useful relations able to secure material or symbolic advantages".

Such an understanding of individuals' family oriented social values also features in the work of Coleman (1988, 1990) with his idea that individuals can obtain better social status or wealth through their connections in social networks. Specifically, Coleman (1988; 1990) defines social capital as the values and norms embedded in families and communities that result in individuals' different levels of human capital. Farr (2004, p. 9) evaluates the common social capital elements between Bourdieu and Coleman as the "shared social structures" and "facilitated actions within these structures". However, Cannone (2009) sees major differences between the two authors. Bourdieu talks about social capital as resources that belong to and enable individuals to access other forms of capital (economic or cultural) whereas Coleman considers social capital existing in the relations among people (ibid). To Coleman (1988, p. 100), social capital is "like other forms of capital… productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible". These resource inputs inherent in social capital structure may be "family relations" and "community social organization" (Coleman, 1990, p. 300). Cannone (2009, p. 45) describes Coleman's social capital as "a benign force generated as a by-product of social relations", acting, for example, as channels for information (i.e., about jobs or important events), or "by forcing individuals to act according to certain norms and by providing effective sanctions that are ultimately beneficial to the whole community". Coleman's different conceptualisation has been described as setting a vital turning point in identifying the wider impacts of social capital for a group of individuals (Bjørnskov, 2006).

Drawing on the work of Coleman, Putnam (1993b) firmly believes that social capital is not the property of individuals but self-reinforces and accumulates from the spaces between them. Accordingly, Putnam (1993b) characterizes social capital as a dense horizontal network of associations in the context of the civic community where citizens pursue their self-interest within a framework of the broader public interest. This structure of social relationships, to him, features the

solidarity, trust and cooperation among members of the communities (Putnam, 1995; Carpenter et al., 2004). The contribution of Putnam's notion of community social capital has influenced community development theory and practice, both in the United States and internationally (Defilippis, 2001).

In discussing the community level of social capital, Lin (1999, p. 32) suggests that social capital is best explored as the "elements and processes in the production and maintenance of collective assets". These elements and processes, according to Putnam (1995), feature social organizations' coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. To him, they necessarily include generalized trust, norms of cooperation or reciprocity, and networks. This set of social capital components has been examined by Hooghe & Stolle (2003), Woolcock & Narayan (2000), Adger (2003), and Nyamori et al., (2012). Among these components, trust has been much discussed as a feature of shared norms of cooperation and psychological capacities, which facilitates associations, activities, or relations that bring people together as a community (see e.g., Fukuyama, 1995; Bowles and Gintis, 2002; Glaeser et al., 2002; Farr, 2004; Ostrom, 2007, Cannone, 2009). Coming back to the ideas of Lin (1999), the author interestingly appears to combine the notions of individual social capital and community social capital, identifying social capital to be individuals' human capital that aggregates to benefit the collective rather than the individual. In fact, Lin (1999) proposes social capital being closely attached with social networks that contain resources from which social capital is captured (ibid, p. 28). To Lin (1999, p. 48), "social networks has much to say and to do about the development and future of social capital". Seemingly, Lin's work sets an inquiry for further studies about social capital at a network level. Section 2.3.2 will discuss in detail the meaning of network and social capital in the area of urban community-based upgrading.

Social capital has also been examined at the macro level (i.e., at nation scale) in relation to the impacts of "social control and social trust on effective governance and improved social structures" (Fukuyama, 1995; Zhao, 2014, p. 81). Specifically, Fukuyama (1995) explains that the divergent economic outcomes between two groups of countries (China, France and Italy versus Germany, Japan and the US) are caused by different levels of trust in families, religion and the state in the society. Implicitly, by moving social capital from the micro levels of social structure (as examined by Bourdieu and Coleman) to community level, Putnam also refers to social capital as notions of both civil society and engines of democratic government and economic growth at the macro-scale of regions and nations (Walls & Dollery, 2002, Cannone, 2009).

There seems to be an ongoing debate about whether individual social capital (human capital) benefits individuals or the group. Moreover, a problem with existing accounts seems to be that they

fail to provide a comprehensive understanding about the specific meaning and processes of social capital components such as trust, cooperation and other behavioural norms in a given context, especially related to local governance issues. Questions to be answered, for example, are what level of social capital and its specific components influence the achievement of a local collective initiative particularly in a transitioning context; and, if any, what influences their existence, emergence and/or operation?

2.2.2 Social capital formation approach

Social capital theory has also witnessed the emergence of contrasting approaches in examining how social capital is formed. The formation of social capital, also known as the origins or sources of social capital, has been the most debated topic of social capital theory since the early 2000s. For local governance issues, two approaches of defining social capital have been suggested by Jackman and Miller (1998): exogenous (civil society-centred approach) and endogenous (state-centred approach). The former considers social capital and its components originate from civic associations to promote political and economic performance (Putnam 1993a; Fukuyama 1999). The latter defines social capital as an outcome of political arrangements (e.g., Levi 1996; Tarrow 1996; Skocpol et al. 2000). Because this research explores how social relations are mobilized and generated in two housing projects, it is important to revisit this debate.

Civil society-centred approach

A society-centred approach was historically advocated by Tocqueville with his notion of the role of both informal and formal associations as the "learning school for democracy" (Tocqueville, 1889; Rothstein & Stolle, 2002, pp. 4-5; Vilhelmsdóttir & Ómarsdóttir, 2012). According to Tocqueville (1889), civic activism facilitates citizens' participation and influences governments. Following de Tocqueville, Coleman and Putnam are considered the most influential authors advocating a society-centred approach. To them, social structures and networks critically strengthen existing interpersonal links and generate potentially beneficial outcomes for the whole society (Baron, 2000; Field 2003; Cannone, 2009). Specifically, Coleman (1988, 1990) treats social capital as a key resource of both democratic politics and economic prosperity. He (1988) emphasizes the totally positive, beneficial effects of social associations for the members and the society as a result of their strengthened social relationships, mutual trust and information exchange. Putnam (1993a, 1995) maintains a social orientation with his arguments on the two-fold effects of civic associations: the internal effects on individual members' skill acquisition in a participatory democracy and the external effects on the political system. Through his book "Making Democracy Work", Putnam (1993a) quantitatively examined the differences in Italian regional governments' performance and

highlighted the role of socio-cultural factors and civic virtues in sustaining effective, democratic institutions. To him (ibid), the success or failure of Italian government reforms were attributed to territorial factors such as cultural traditions, mutual trust, cooperation and the vibrancy of associational life, which stem from historical and geographical conditions. Following this Italian study, Putnam (1995) continued to highlight the positive impacts of American associational life on good governance.

Putnam's work on civic participation and institutional performance, together with the seminal research by Coleman (1988, 1990) on education was acknowledged by Woolcock & Narayan (2000, p. 225) to provide the "inspiration for most of the current work on social capital". Recent empirical studies have reported positive relationships between social capital and responsively functioning political systems in different countries (Knack & Keefer, 1997; Cusack, 1999; Paxton, 2002; Stolle, 2004; Coffé & Geys, 2005; Andrews, 2011; Vilhelmsdóttir & Ómarsdóttir, 2012). Other studies confirm that societies with higher stocks of social capital are potentially more democratic and have better personal welfare and economic outcomes (Putnam, 1993a, 1995; Woolcock, 1998; Nyamori et al., 2012, p. 573). In the same way, Fukuyama (1995) asserts the influence of social issues in the problematic performance of both micro and macro organizational levels of society. Another supporter of the societal approach is Paxton (2002) who indicates the importance of strong civic associations in both undemocratic and democratic societies. The author (ibid, p. 257) states that civic associations can discourage state oppression and promote political participation and train leaders.

In studies about Australian local governments, civic actions and human capital form social capital for building a strong local democracy by strengthening citizen participation and laying a platform for collaborative local action for the "common good" (Cuthill, 2003; Culhill & Fien, 2005, p. 64). This idea is revisited in another study on local sustainability where the collective capacity had been built or existed within a "community" and within a local context (Evans et al., 2006, p. 853).

This section has reviewed the literature emphasizing the civil society-centred formation approach of social capital. Despite a wide range of evidence from different contexts, this school of thought has been criticized for overemphasizing citizen actions and under-evaluating state agency and associated political factors (Levi, 1996, pp. 49-50; Lowndes & Wilson, 2001, p. 629; Cannone, 2009). The criticisms come from studies advocating a state-centred approach.

State-centred approach

Whilst Tocqueville (1889), Coleman (1988, 1990), Putnam (1993a, 1995) argue that social capital both generates and underpins a strong civil society, others (Berman, 1997; Levi, 1998; Hall, 1999; Lowndes & Wilson, 2001) point out that formal state agencies should not be neglected; social capital flourishes only if it is embedded in and linked to formal political and legal institutions. Critiques mainly target Putnam who is seen as the 'most influential advocator of the society-centred approach'. For example, Warner (2001, p. 187), in examining local government's role in strengthening social capital, criticizes Putnam's Italian study for "little evidence of social capital constructability and state intervention in those areas where social capital is weak". Putnam's work is also challenged by Fine (2002) for the incomprehensive quantitative approach measuring social aspects and the inadequate acknowledgment of modern capitalist mechanisms. Tarrow (1996, p.394) equally disputes Putnam's idea that "ethical and horizontal relationships nurtured in voluntary organizations' democracy and the (free market) economy can work for society as a whole" because to him, in Putnam's work, "nothing could be learned from how different regions were actually governed". Recent literature has continuously criticized Putnam's reference to public good as being superficial, and have noted the problematic methodological approach of social relations (Giaccaria, 2009). According to Giaccaria (2009, p. 72), not all social relations "necessarily lead to more inclusive and democratic practices". Of the same opinion, Cannone (2009, p. 57) argue that "the Putnamian understanding of social capital needs to be placed within a broader and more complex historical and political framework". They point out that Putnam does not consider the two intertwined processes aimed at economic restructuring and the dismantling of the welfare state in his explanation of the declining associational life in the United States and Italy.

The institution-centred approach claims its position in reference to the ideas of seminal authors like Bourdieu and an increasing number of empirical studies (Rothstein & Stolle, 2002; Häkli & Minca, 2009). Bourdieu's social account (1980, 1986) manifests institutional forces with the view that social networks and contacts are the products of class divisions like economic and cultural capital, and can foster the hierarchical social structure of capitalism only when crucial resources are allowed to be controlled within a certain power structure. As cited by Cannone (2009, p. 42), Bourdieu (1986, p.248) defines social capital as a "possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition that provides each member with the backing of the collectively-owned capital". This perception distinctively features Bourdieu's social capital that is constructed through efforts of an institutional level (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu's social capital - being "the network of relationships is the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously" (ibid), as per Cannone (2009), appears to refer to individuals'

connections of economic and power relations. K. Newton (1999, p.17) follows Bourdieu and calls for attention to the top down system in which the government's structure and policies strongly influence the existence of a civil society. In the same vein, Rothstein and Stolle (2002, p. 7) suggest that aspects of civic life, including "cooperative ties, trust in networks or groups' activities", are affected by "governmental systems". The idea was supported by Adler and Kwon (2002) who concurrently examined the sources of social capital in the social structure where the actor is located.

Following an institution-centred approach, empirical studies have examined the impacts of local government's initiatives on social capital enhancement, including a study of English community participation practices (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998); Italian urban social planning initiatives (Bull & Jones, 2006); British local governments' "democratic renewal" (Lowndes & Wilson, 2001, p. 662). In these studies, local governments positively contribute to social capital formation by opening their 'political opportunity structure', engaging voluntary organizations and community groups in trust-based partnership arrangements. In the same way, Lowndes & Wilson (2001, pp. 634 -639), in particular, identify four areas of local governance that potentially shape social capital. The first area is the relationship of the local authority to the voluntary sector, in which local governments recognize and support voluntary associations through, among others, grant levels, access to funding or wider networks (Lowndes & Wilson, 2001, p. 634). According to the authors (ibid, p. 636), this relationship can be any form of support or, alternatively, general opportunities to build capacity for community groups. The second area is the local authority's opportunities for citizen participation, which refers to an enabling local governance system that empowers the citizens in civic activity (ibid, p. 636). The authors emphasize that exercises like public meetings and consultations facilitate community networks and form new associations by informing citizens and getting them to meet one another. A recommendation, however, is that participation only means social capital provided with the development of norms of trust and reciprocity that generate collective actions (ibid, p. 637). The third area is a local authority's responsiveness to citizen's concerns, which highlights incentives that value and pursue social capital related benefits and the design of local democratic political institutions (p. 638). The fourth area is democratic leadership and social inclusion, meaning the accountability and responsibility of leadership at both government and community level (p. 640). In this way, the authors argue political equality and acknowledgement of diversified interests are critical conditions for the development of social capital.

A mixed approach

The above section reviewed two distinct approaches to social capital formation that have underpinned much of the literature on contemporary social capital. The main weakness of this classification is that, in many cases, it is hard to define the decisive role of either the state or the civil society. In fact, in political economy and new institutional economics, in line with other approaches of identifying social capital sources[5], a mixed approach, or synergy approach, has been proposed by Woolcock & Narayan (2000, p. 229- 239). To them, governments, corporations and civic groups all have variable impacts on the attainment of collective goals; the importance is to "define the conditions under which the synergies between the state and the civil society emerge or fail to emerge" (ibid, pp. 235 - 236). A mixed approach has been examined in a number of studies on community-based urban regeneration programmes. They hold the view that both civil society and the state affect local issues' collective outcomes. For example, Bull & Jones (2006, p. 767) suggested combining the notion of social capital by Putnam (1993a, 1993b) and 'enabling governance' by Bevir & Rohdes (2003) for better urban regeneration programmes. The authors argue that two prerequisites include the reinforcement of community networks, the norms of reciprocity and trust; and the promotion of consultation and participation in partnership with the voluntary sector (also understood as the civil society). Similarly, the notion of a combined approach has been alluded to by Maloney et al. (2000, p. 223) that "research should not only focus on the effect of community-level social capital on government performance, but also the effect of government-associational relationships on social capital". Interestingly, the implication of a mixed approach is also found in Putnam's studies. Despite explicitly maintaining the role of civic associations in generating social capital and enhancing the effectiveness of government, Putnam sees the role of government policies in encouraging or destroying social capital (see, for instance, Putnam, 1993b, pp. 10-11). He contends that social capital can be stimulated or discouraged by government's community engagement policy; to him, the effects of designed programmes can tie individual choices with collective engagement (see ibid, p. 10). A similar view on the combined influence of civil-society and the state in community development programmes has been noted by DeFillippis (2001) and Kearns (2003). These authors, nevertheless, remind us that these programmes should address conflicting interests rather than seeking for win-win relationships in order to empower local neighbourhoods;

[5] The communitarian view, the networks view, the institutional view, and the synergy view. These views vary from the horizontal dimension within a community (communitarian view), to both horizontal and vertical relationships between people and among organizations like communities and firms (network view); or the vertical connection between the civil society networks and political, legal and institutional entities (Institutional view)

social capital, to the authors, differs from social networks because it is more than just being social forces connected to power (ibid).

In summary, this section has reviewed existing discussions of social capital formation approaches, particularly for local governance issues. Although a mixed approach of both social and institutional forces has been suggested in some studies on local issues, few studies have empirically examined the internal processes of this synergy. This gap, therefore, necessitates more in-depth insights. The following section presents another way of looking at social capital by examining the three dimensions of social relations, namely bonding, bridging and linking social capital.

2.2.3 The three dimensions of social capital

This section examines the concepts of bonding, bridging and linking social capital. These concepts are regarded as the "most promising development" in social capital theory because they enable a "more complex and robust re-theorization of how social capital components (trust, networks and social norms) intertwine" (Füzer & Monostori, 2012, p. 32).

Bonding social capital

Bonding social capital, largely known as social capital's internal dimension, centres on the cohesive characteristics that engage the pursuit of collective goals within a collective group (Putnam, 1993b; Gittell & Vidal, 1998; Putnam, 1995). Prell (2009) illustrates bonding social capital as the ties and networks between those who share common characteristics like community members, families or ethnic groups. The internal dimension of social capital is also called integrative social capital (Woolcock, 1998) or closure social capital (Burt, 2001). As Bull & Jones (2006, p. 771) remark, internal links of a homogeneous group structure, tend to generate "diversified resources and mutual help" and sustain "strong ties, trust among members and the capability to achieve complex tasks". Particularly, trustworthiness among community members, is recognized as nurturing social life and promoting the norms of generalized reciprocity (Putnam, 1993b; Kearns, 2003). Putnam (1993b, p. 4) asserts that "Stocks of social capital… tend to be self-reinforcing and cumulative. Successful collaboration in one endeavour builds connections and trust – social assets that facilitate future collaboration in other unrelated tasks".

Though bonding capital has been complimented as lubricating and reinforcing the community, the strong bonding social capital of poor groups has been pointed out as constraining development (Kearns, 2003). Such a weakness of bonding ties, considered as "strong ties", is evaluated by Kearns (ibid, p. 11) as resulting from geographical concentration and disconnection and likely hinders problematic communities' ways out of poverty and exclusion. In the same way, Putnam (2002)

comments that bonding social capital is not always beneficial because members of the groups interact in the same circles and may miss new information. In another study, the constraints of strong internal links are pointed out as "hampering freedom, innovations and progresses" (Nyamori et al., 2912, p. 579). Another critical viewpoint relates to the notion of trust and reciprocity within a neighbourhood. Anderson (1999) argues that these relations result from the fact that people living in a same neighbourhood, also known as communities, need to rely on each other for daily activities that cannot be operated based on economic relations. For example, someone would expect to be paid back with a favour after cutting his or her neighbour's hair without being paid with money (Anderson, 1999; DeFillipis, 2001). However, these relationships of poor urban communities are emphasized by DeFillipis (2001) as likely to be destroyed by a change in local economic conditions. Possibly, the author means that because community members' economic conditions have changed, they no longer depend on each other, therefore, their interactions that facilitate trust and mutual help diminish. Such a situation, consequently, implies (and equally suggested by Portes (1998) that close interactions in poor urban communities tend to rely mainly on relationships with kin and friends, who support each other's everyday survival because of their similar situations.

Apart from conditions to sustain trust and mutual help in communities, DeFillipis (2001) draws attention to the role of wider communities' networks in generating communities' bonding capital. The author (ibid, p. 797) suggests that communities' bonding ties do not normally rest in the lack of trust-based relations, but rather in the capacity to generate social networks and mutual support within communities. There has been some evidence to suggest that external intervention is usually required to strengthen the eroded social capital occurring in communities that are facing crises or have low levels of social capital (Moser, 1996; Moffat & Finnis, 2005). In view of these observations, one may suppose that bonding relations in urban poor communities seem to turn away from the social capital type of Putnam and rather reflect the power relations in Loury (1977) or Bourdieu (1986); bonding relations in this case seemingly reflect the mixed view of social capital formation discussed above.

Bridging social capital

Bridging social capital relates to relationships that tie an actor, being either an individual or a group, to other actors outside a social network (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Relationships of this dimension, according to Füzer & Monostori (2012), are considered weaker because they link different associations. These connections are normally found in the form of "facilitated group activities across various social strata, stretching over tighter relationships and featuring organizations and continuity" (ibid, p. 62). Although these relations are normally weaker than bonding ties, much of the literature

on bridging social capital emphasized the high level of generalized trust (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000; Füzer & Monostori, 2012). Generalized trust is considered the *"sine qua non*" of bridging social capital because people rely on each other's honesty and reciprocity to develop group activities and achieve their aims (Füzer & Monostori, 2012, p. 61). Investment in this relational dimension is considered essential (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). According to Füzer & Monostori (2012, p. 62), bridging relations are "most tangibly manifested in civil organizations and community networks". The remaining weakness of existing accounts, however, seems to rest in the poor elaboration of how generalized trust operates in those civil organizations and community networks.

Linking social capital.

Linking social capital, forming the third dimension of external social capital, was added by Woolcock (2001) to connect the different levels of power and social status. This dimension of social capital reaches out to different people and dissimilar circumstances hence it enables members to obtain resources that are not available in the community (Woolcock, 2001). This type of social relationship can be understood as the connection between individuals with institutional entities (Bourdieu, 1986); the ability of people to work with groups that hold power and maintain control (Fukuyama, 1995; De Fillipis, 2001). Recent literature on local governance has paid much attention to this vertical dimension of relations that potentially enable local governments to "achieve their objective of governing" (Nyamori et al., 2012, p. 573). The connection between different levels of power and social status or, put differently, between civil society and the state, raises a question regarding the role played by the civil society and the state in facilitating the relationship between the two; this question relates to the above section of social capital formation approach (see section 2.2.2).

Thus far, the recent sections review another way of looking at social capital through the three dimensions of relations: bonding, bridging and linking. Seemingly, bonding ties have attracted significant attention in the literature, appearing to be essential community assets, as has been discussed in section 2.2.1 in relation to the social capital at a community level. It, on the other hand, accentuates weaknesses that may be potentially addressed by external resources provided by bridging and linking relations. Linking relations, on the other hand, suggest similar implications regarding the role of the civil society and the state discussed in section 2.2.2; in addition, they seem to relate to discussions about social capital at the macro level, which features the impacts of social capital on aspects of governing at a national level.

Taken together, the above sections examine different ways of looking at social capital through categories of social capital levels and components; formation approaches; and dimensions of bonding, bridging and linking relations. Because these categories of social capital discussion attempt

a framework for understanding social capital from different perspectives, they appear to overlap with each other and yet fail to provide a comprehensive picture encapsulating multi-aspects of social capital levels, components, and dimensions of relations. Part of the problem here is that existing discussions at times seemingly use different terms to mean the same thing and the same term to mean different things. There is still much debate about where social capital is generated and how the three dimensions of social capital flow together. Thus, there is still an open door for ideas on a synergetic framework that enables the incorporation of different perspectives of social capital. Can the categorization of bonding, bridging and linking social capital play this role by allowing the investigation of, in each dimension, the operation of social capital components, levels, and formation approaches? This question, if answered, may contribute to operationalize the three social capital dimensions of bonding, bridging and linking in a richer meaning. The need has been identified, for example, by Füzer and Monostori (2012, p.61) that bridging social capital has been rather "poorly operationalized for decades". Other questions to address may be that among the three social capital dimensions, what is their relationship? Bonding capital that then contributes to flows through bridges to strengthen linking capital or linking capital that enables communities in and through networks. These questions, if answered, might provide insights to the undefined distinction and relationship among the three social capital dimensions, raised by Blokland & Savage (2008) to be the task of future work that, so far, appears to have not been well addressed.

2.3 Social capital and community participation in urban upgrading

Since the 1990s, social capital ideas have gained significant political attractiveness for those seeking 'positive' social, economic and political outcomes (Bull & Jones, 2006, p. 771). Community participation has also captured global attention as development studies' orthodoxy, promising to include and enable marginalized groups to express their voices and have more choices (Cornwall, 2002). In urban governance, particularly urban slum upgrading, the promotion of social capital has been advocated as essential for more effective community participation (Galuszka, 2014; Moksnes & Melin, 2014). This claim comes particularly from community-based urban upgrading networks that emerged to challenge conventional upgrading approaches (Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2012; Galuszka, 2014).

The following section will examine the concepts of conventional participatory upgrading approaches, community-based urban upgrading networks, community participation based on social capital enhancement and the implications of social capital in community-based urban upgrading networks. A critical view of community participation is presented in the last sub-section.

2.3.1 Community participation in conventional participatory upgrading approaches

As introduced in Chapter 1, urban poor housing is a global phenomenon that is increasingly challenging urban governments and communities. Since the mid-20th century, this issue has been targeted by a variety of upgrading policies and programmes involving multi-dimensional (economic, social, institutional) solutions (Al-Nammari, 2013). Upgrading programmes, especially those coming in parallel with financial assistance schemes from international development and governmental entities, normally set community participation as an essential criterion for efficient, sustainable outcomes (Nguyen, 2009). The implementation of community participation, nevertheless, has been much criticized in the literature for "being implemented through formal spaces and not necessarily leading to social connections" (Edwards, 2008; Muchadenyika, 2015, p. 2). These programmes are considered to follow a "conventional participatory approach", the disillusionment with which particularly features community participation promoted in the World Bank's fastest growing development assistance strategy (Dasgupta & Beard, 2007, p. 244). Starting in 1970, the Bank's upgrading programme followed John Turner's self-help movement and the orthodoxy of inclusive and participatory development interventions (Cornwall, 2002; Nguyen, 2009; Andavarapu & Edelman, 2013). These programmes used rhetoric like: "Helping the poor to help themselves" (Andavarapu & Edelman, 2013, p. 187) and "overcoming the shortage of government subsidies for public housing" (Wekesa et al., 2011, p. 241) by providing loans for low-cost housing and infrastructure construction in developing countries (Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones, 2002; Andavarapu & Edelman, 2013). They were, nonetheless, condemned as the "aestheticization" of poverty with little impact on poverty reduction and social inclusion because of focusing heavily on physical construction and inadequately considering the slum residents' ability to repay loans (Roy, 2005; Andavarapu & Edelman, 2013, p. 187).

Another example that failed to effectively address community participation was the "Enablement policy" initiated between 1986 and 1992 (Andavarapu & Edelman, 2013, p. 188). The policy attempted partnerships between the state, markets, NGOs and individuals by featuring NGOs' role in promoting local knowledge, and involving the poor (ibid). It was criticized for mainly benefiting big NGOs rather than local people (Lewis, 2007). Programmes following this policy have been assessed for merely doing the opposite of previous programmes' limitations regarding the "space ideology" or "aestheticization of poverty", without adequate evidence of effectiveness (AlSayyad, 2004, Roy, 2005, pp. 151-152).

Critical attention has also been paid to the third set of upgrading policies of the 1970s that suggested the formalization of informal settlements (Ananya & Nezar, 2004; Roy, 2005; Andavarapu & Edelman, 2013). These policies attempted to maintain the poor's interests and living conditions by enabling their participation in credit and financial markets (Roy, 2005; Wekesa et al., 2011). Nevertheless, critiques show that "the low-income's right to participate was much different from their actual participation due to the monopolistic nature of property" (Durand-Lasserve & Royston, 2002, p. 10).

In summary, three main conventional strategies of including community participation in upgrading projects have suffered significant criticism. The response has been a greater focus on what are described as community-based upgrading projects using networks.

2.3.2 Community participation in community-based urban upgrading networks

This section discusses the concept of community participation that promotes social capital enhancement in community-based urban upgrading networks. Before going into detail, it is necessary to investigate the meaning of 'community-based urban upgrading networks'. However, because my study covers two housing projects implemented under one programme (the ACCA) in Vietnam, in addition to a review of general community-based urban upgrading networks, significant focus is put on the literature regarding the operation of the ACCA network. Second, there is a tension between the meaning of "networks" in traditional social network analysis and in social capital theory (Blokland & Savage, 2008, p. 5). Where "social network analysis" means distinguishing cliques and factions, and charting gaps, 'networks' in social capital theory refers to secured ties, forged connections, whether of a "bonding", or "bridging" type (see Scott, 1990; Putnam, 1993a,b; Wasserman and Faust, 1994; Burt, 1997; Blokland & Savage, 2008, p. 5). Based on this study's purpose in exploring social relations embedded in upgrading networks, the latter meaning of network is applied.

Community-based urban upgrading networks

Community-based urban upgrading networks emphasise a shift from government or donor-led development and involves the residents of slums in the development process (Galuszka, 2014) Community-based urban upgrading networks facilitate transnational alliances of local federations of communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and practitioners to promote community-based upgrading practices (including household enumeration, savings, experience exchanges) and partnerships between communities and the state (Ley et al., 2016). These upgrading practices attempt to strengthen community networks and their "political participation" by inclusively involving

poor communities in local government's development priorities and decisions (Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2012, p. 395; Galuszka, 2014). Programmes following this approach have different names like community-based upgrading (Galuszka, 2014) or inclusive upgrading (Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2012). These networks have been evaluated as a formidable force in the dynamics of urban housing and development in developing countries (Sengupta & Sharma, 2012)

Two major networks that follow this model are the Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) and the regional 'sister' model in Asia exemplified by the Asian Coalition of Housing Rights (ACHR) with a regional platform for Asia's Urban Poor Community Movements, called Urban Poor Coalition Asia (UPCA). The SDI network has a membership of national alliances in 34 countries world-wide – with each national partnership comprising a federation of savings groups and supporting NGOs (Schermbrucker et al., 2016). ACHR/UPCA operates specifically in Asia and supports the regional network of urban poor federations (Leonhardt, 2012). UPCA is newly emerged from the ACHR's original community-based programme called Asian Coalition of Community Action (ACCA programme) (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2015). This urban upgrading programme was built based on the Thai Baan ManKong (secured housing) programme initiated in 2003 under the partnership between the national Union of Low Income Community Organizations (NULICO) and the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI) (Archer, 2010b). The programme aimed to strengthen social capital through collaboration between the Government institution (CODI) and community groups (Archer, 2012a; Minnery et al, 2013).

Community-based urban upgrading networks propose strengthening social connections among slum residents and between slum communities and decision makers to improve the effectiveness of slum upgrading solutions (Sen, 1998; Patel & Mitlin, 2004; D'Cruz and Satterthwaite, 2005; Roy, 2005; Sengupta & Sharma, 2012, p. 221; Andavarapu & Edelman, 2013) (Fig. 2.1). This approach promotes community participation in close connection with the strengthening of social capital advocated by the growing citizenship literature (Robins et al., 2008). Studies following this line of thinking argue that the poor opt out of conventional participatory approaches and seek means to participate through alternative non-state solutions (Muchadenyika, 2015). Community participation, in this case, is understood as "a means towards equity" because it enables the poor to collectively influence public resource allocation and decision making, as suggested by Prokopy (2005) and Agarwal (2001).

The coexistence of participation and social capital enhancement largely refers to the concept of "empowerment", suggested by Arnstein (1969, p. 217), which necessitates "the role of grassroots communities" in determining how "to share the information"; "what decisions to make"; and "how to divide the benefits" in a way that reflects "the interest of the general public", instead of only a

proportion of the people. Discussing the connection between social capital based participation and empowerment, Bull & Jones (2006, p. 783) suggest that empowerment is feasible only when "trust and participation are considered hand in hand with even distribution of power and resources". In the same way, Cornwall (2004) discusses strategies for more genuinely transformative social actions - an authentic community-created space – without which participation does not necessarily lead to empowerment. Strategies, according to him, need to address social and power relationships that intimately affect people's ability to enter and exercise voice in arenas for participation (ibid, p. 85). Mott (2004, p. 93) brings attention to a "popular space" where people manage an issue by working together, building alliances to combine attempts to change the "rules of the game" by creating connections with other actors. Thinking this way, Mott highlights the existence of bonding, bridging and linking capital in a participation process without using these terms directly. Indeed, notions of bonding, bridging and linking capital have long been embedded in discussions about empowerment and community participation.

Devine-Wright et al. (2001) discuss the positive connection between participation and empowerment by depicting the strengthening of communities' bonding ties such as trust, norms and social networks. Dekker (2007) finds that a low level of trust in deprived areas (lack of bonding ties) negatively influences the degree to which residents are willing to take action to improve their neighbourhood's situation. Kearns (2003, p. 7) suggests more elaborate concepts regarding bonding and linking relations by emphasizing "the social network used by people; social norms widely shared and adhered to in people's behaviours, and the level of trust people have for each other or in the institutions of governments". In the same way, Vilar & Cartes (2016, p. 58) highlight the role of bonding, bridging and linking relations in empowering disadvantaged groups to "collectively act, forge alliances with external actors, and voice their concerns in order to obtain opportunities" (Vilar & Cartes, 2016, p. 58). Consistent with this view are the findings of research from a number of country-based urban upgrading studies. For example, community networks effectively influenced Chinese communities' participation in urban regeneration (Shi & Cai, 2006; Zhai & Ng, 2013, p.15). Likewise, positive connections between social capital and effective participation in Thai urban slum upgrading programmes have been observed by Archer (2010b) and confirmed in another study by Natakun (2013).

The differences identified between the conventional participatory upgrading and community based upgrading approaches are illustrated in figure 2.1.

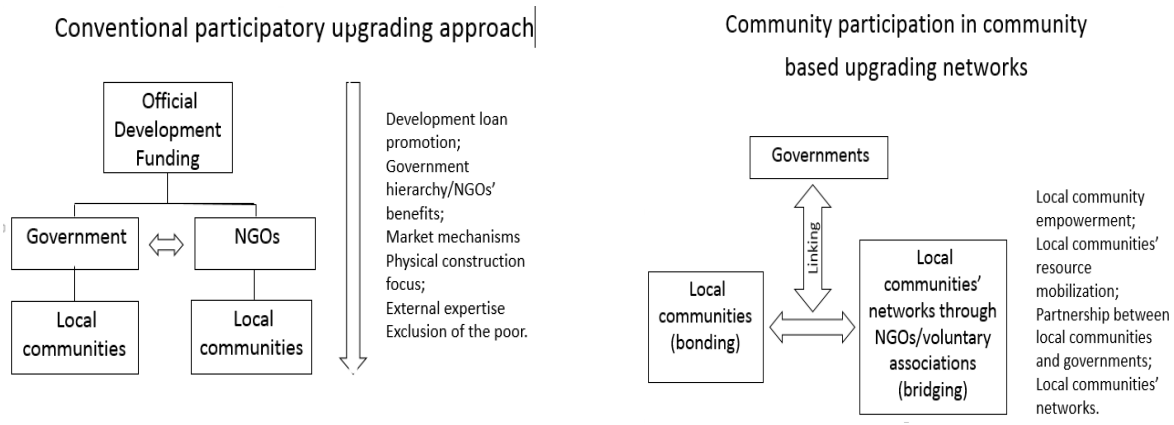

Figure 2.1: Community participation in two distinguishable upgrading approaches (Original)

2.3.3 Social capital in community-based urban upgrading networks

As social capital has been recognised as a key component in community based upgrading networks then it is useful to consider inherent social organization features such as networks, social trust, collective efficacy, and the sense of community and participation in joint community activities (Sen, 1998; Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2004; D'Cruz & Satterthwaite, 2005; Sengupta & Sharma, 2012, p. 221). In addition, several lines of evidence suggest horizontal linkages among the urban poor and vertical relations between poor communities and external stakeholders (Archer, 2012a; Boonyabancha & Mitlin, 2012; Sengupta & Sharma, 2012). A more detailed account of each social relation dimension in community-based urban upgrading networks is given below.

Internal community ties

Internal community ties in urban slum upgrading, also known as bonding ties, or community social networks, demonstrate social aspects like trust, reciprocity and cooperation within community networks (Blokland & Savage, 2008, p. 6). These internal ties are considered vital for communities of similar housing types or housing tenure because they tend to work together to avoid evictions (Putnam, 1993; Ha, 2010; Sengupta & Sharma, 2012, p.227). In addition, Sengupta & Sharma (2012, p. 234) observe that networks of individuals within and among families, especially in Asia, operate effectively because of their culture in which families play a key role in the society. The authors (ibid), therefore, call for attention to the critical role of squatters' inter-household and inter-family networks in maintaining reciprocal exchange and mobilizing collective efforts to manage their circumstances.

The strengthening of these bonding ties relies on the role of communities' wider civil society networks (D'Cruz & Mudimu, 2013). These networks are described as introducing mechanisms that go beyond the formal state structure and processes by drawing on and strengthening "existing social

networks of urban slum settlements" (Mitlin, 2004, p. 4). By doing so, community-based urban upgrading networks involve and enable disadvantaged groups to organize themselves to improve housing conditions via "self-help" (Sengupta & Sharma, 2012, p. 221; Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones, 2002). In addition to employing a participatory approach, these upgrading projects aim to strengthen social bonding ties by promoting in-situ-upgrading strategies to minimize settlement displacement (Wirlin, 1999; Roy, 2005, p. 150; Huchzermeyer, 2006; Minnery et al., 2013). Commenting on this view, Andavarapu & Edelman (2013, p. 185) emphasize that "community-based urban upgrading networks overcome negative impacts of settlement eradication and reallocation", thus, according to the authors (ibid), they avoid disrupting neighbourhoods' existing social, economic and political ties. Consistent impacts of upgrading initiatives following this approach have been examined in Archer's study (2010b) of Thai slum upgrading programmes. It is reported that trust and solidarity between community members increased throughout the participatory upgrading process initiated by the Thai national community development network (ibid). If this study's findings are accurate, a trustful community is built because residents' are "less likely to break the norms of their collective action" (ibid, p. 213).

In addition, the enhancement of social bonding ties in community-based urban upgrading networks features the role of community savings groups. Studies of the ACCA upgrading programme provide empirical evidence on the maintenance of communities' internal relations because of residents' participation in savings groups. Archer (2012b) observes that saving activities generated in the ACCA upgrading projects considerably augments trust among the poor because they collectively save, build new relationships and learn to trust one another. These savings groups are evaluated to help poor residents address their collective needs because they learn to work and help one another (Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2012, p. 399). Their connections, therefore, go beyond financial gain and effectively lead to collective action (d'Cruz & Mudimu, 2013, p. 38).

The exchange network of poor communities

As introduced earlier, bridging relations, in general, feature the role of civil-society networks, which have been acknowledged as the most promising source for scaling up activities (see Castells, 1983; Evans, 2002, p. 18). In community-based urban slum upgrading programmes, bridging relations feature the role of experience exchange and the information sharing networks of poor communities (D'Cruz & Mudimu, 2013). These exchange networks have become a platform for poor communities to address their collective needs and solutions, which appears to set a primary foundation to empower and mobilize the urban poor to work together (D'Cruz & Mudimu, 2013). To Leonhardt (2012) and Mitlin & Satterthwaite (2012), these networks help low-income and disadvantaged

communities to break their isolation and strengthen their collective capacity. The ACCA upgrading programme purportedly builds on this ideology and attempts to get poor communities to gather their scattered resources and address collective needs (Boonyabancha & Mitlin, 2012). These networks are stated to be vehicles for urban poor citizens to engage with one another across boundaries, trans-locally and trans-nationally (Smith, 2005; Ley et al., 2016). This is encapsulated by Leonhardt (2012, p. 490): "The Asian Coalition of Community Actions (ACCA) program supports community to community learning process beyond city wide, throughout the country and across national borders in the form of assessment and exchange missions, regular meetings, workshops and trainings".

Thus far, the two sections above have examined both the internal or bonding and horizontal dimensions of relations in community-based upgrading networks. The horizontal relations across communities are acknowledged as the first important steps to empower poor communities in their own development. Relevant literature, nevertheless, points out that community-based networks may limit the impact of community development if they do not lead to vertical influence, understood as empowering communities to partner with local government or the 'linking' relationships (Pantelic & Pantoja, 1999; Pantoja, 2000, Archer, 2010b, p. 215). The following section presents this dimension of relations advocated in community-based upgrading networks.

Community empowerment

Community-based urban upgrading networks follow an upgrading policy stream that involves slum residents in the urban planning discourse and engages multi-levels of stakeholders to address the issue of informal settlement (Harvey, 2000; Appadurai, 2001; Roy, 2005; Andavarapu & Edelman, 2013). A key aspect of this social relation dimension to Rakodi & Lioyd-Jones (2002, p. 145) is the power relationship between urban poor neighbourhoods with those who control access to resources, including, for example, "political forces (national and local government), money lenders, land lords and the police". A consistently held view is that community-based urban upgrading advocates the empowerment of disadvantaged communities by building mutual trust between communities and local government, strengthening community participation, and partnerships between local government and voluntary associations.

The norm of trust manifested in community-based urban upgrading networks accentuates the belief that the urban poor can define their own development and help themselves (Archer, 2010a). Taylor (2000, p. 1029) notices that "local people know most about local conditions"; they, therefore, "can be crucial in both the diagnosis of the systematic causes of problems and who should be engaged in their amelioration". Community-based urban upgrading networks draw on this and mobilize "the

energy, resourcefulness and motivation" evident in the poor communities (Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2012, p. 397). By doing this, community-based urban upgrading networks challenge the conventional approach and call for a partnership between urban informal settlements and local authorities. They claim to fill the gaps between local communities and government institutions, which normally takes time for the two sides to build trust and mutual understanding (Kearns, 2003). Such mistrust has been, by and large, dominant in conventional urban slum upgrading policies. It is caused by factors from both sides: "the urban poor's unrecognized" or "illegal social status and the inability of local authorities to act on behalf of the people" (see Temkin & Rohe, 1998; Kearns, 2003, p. 10).

Besides promoting trust between local government and communities, community-based urban upgrading networks draw attention to the concept of community participation that features the role of community ties, community leaders and participatory planning approaches. The role of community ties relates to the bonding capital that enables an inclusive, participatory upgrading process led by the people. This point refers to section 2.3.2, which discusses the positive connection between social capital enhancement and community participation. The role of community leaders has been observed as the unifying or decisive force that significantly influences linking relations between upgrading communities and external actors by performing their relevant roles (Archer, 2010b; Natakun, 2013; Vilar & Cartes, 2016). Specifically, in Archer's (2010b) study, community leaders are officially mandated to lead the project and represent the upgrading communities in communications with other stakeholders. The author (ibid, p. 153) suggested that the "trust and faith the community members have in the leader" gives them the faith to participate in the upgrading programme.

The design of participatory planning approaches was observed by D'Cruz & Mudimu (2013, p. 40) to serve as an empowerment tool and offers solutions for city governments to address the problem of growing slums. Other studies have provided similar findings. For example, Galuszka's (2014) study identifies the role of three upgrading initiatives in the Philippines in resolving communities' internal conflicts and resistance. The study, in addition, illustrates the leading role of communities obtained from their strengthened negotiating positions and cooperation opportunities with city government (ibid, p.18). Other examples include Cape Town's largest informal settlement (Bénit-Gbaffou & Piper, 2012) and the upgrading programme in Zimbabwe (Muchadenyika, 2015). In these projects, citizen participation was anchored in civil society to nurture collective action and respond to challenges of informal settlement upgrading. Particularly, the slum profiling and enumeration processes enable the urban poor to inform the decision makers and take part in the upgrading of their settlements (Muchadenyika, 2015). The use of a participatory approach, according to both studies, leads to

active involvement of communities in municipal governance (Bénit-Gbaffou & Piper, 2012; Muchadenyika, 2015). Likewise, Archer (2010b, p. 218) reports that the implementation of the Thai Baan Mankong (secure housing) programme gradually changed the relations between the state and the urban poor that had been not at ease for decades because of the inequality of power and dependency. Evaluation of the upgrading programme concluded that it encouraged collective actions in tenure negotiations and various community care aspects (Archer, 2012a). Also reported by that study, a collective lease agreement was secured with the support of the National Union of Low Income Community Organizations (NULICO), which better integrated the communities into urban society because of improved, permanent housing conditions (ibid, p. 183).

The collaborative relations between local government and civic associations are another important aspect in linking relations that empower the urban poor to improve their living conditions. A specific example is in Muchadenyika's (2015) study where the involvement of the Zimbabwean Homeless People's Federation and Dialogue on Shelter in the management structure at both city and community bridged the gap between city authorities and the urban poor. Another example is the Thai slum upgrading network that vertically impacted on local government by forming the City Development Funds (CDFs) based on the networks of low-income communities; the network then generated collaborative relations with local government and other stakeholders (Archer, 2012a). The outcomes of the partnership between the voluntary sector and local authorities have been summarized by Wallis & Dollery (2002, pp. 77 –82) as initiatives that "foster synergy and innovation"; these initiatives, according to the authors, significantly enhance "resource efficiency" and "the community's influence" in local public good provisions.

This section described the three dimensions of social relations advocated as resources for the operation of community-based urban slum upgrading networks. The review reveals a combination of both social and institutional forces in the formation of these social relations. Lewandowski (2012, p. 134) evaluates this mixed approach to "hold some promise" for urban upgrading practices. The concern, nevertheless, is how this synergy approach, if applicable, operates in a community-based urban upgrading process when one considers the challenges in realizing a participatory process. The following section will discuss these challenges in detail.

2.3.4 A critical view of community participation

Although a community participation imperative is strong, scepticism about the effectiveness of these participatory arrangements is extensive (Gaventa, 2004). The drawbacks pointed out by Frances (2004) include the usually narrow, functional project approach with defined enterprises, quantifiable

costs and benefits, limited time and budgets. Much of the academic literature has critically claimed that the permanent challenges of community participation lie in the complexity of different levels. National social, economic and institutional frameworks have been widely observed to be obstacles to participatory projects (see Nguyen, 2009). In addition, studies show that different levels of awareness and participation mechanisms in each country have resulted in discrete levels of practical experience of participatory approaches (Varol et al., 2011). At a local level, the capacity of participatory approach organizers prompts another challenge to the implementation of participation. Wallis & Dollery (2002) suggest that the relationship between local government and civic organizations enhances local government's performance and community participation but depends on local government's ability to devolve power and responsibility to civic actors. On the other hand, the capacity of civic actors to promote community participation raises another concern. Lewandowski (2012, p. 134) asserts that civil society based associations can effectively influence the relations of communities with local government only if "they are self-consciously created by civic members and explicitly act with political purposes". Other challenges to a participatory and inclusive process, observed by Muchadenyika (2015), feature traditional bureaucratic procedures and the hesitant attitude of stakeholders to a new form of governance. To overcome these, Muchadenyika suggests requiring investment in communication strategies among stakeholders.

Local social structure diversity has been indicated as another challenge for community participation. Kaufman (1997), in his analysis of community and grassroots democracy, looked at the issue of 'popular participation' at the community level. He identifies the challenges of building inclusive structures by questioning the inequalities in political, economic and social power caused by different classes, castes, age, religion, gender, colour, wealth, education, etc. That the community leaders' role may impede a participatory process is another concern about achieving an authentic participatory process. Some evidence can be listed from upgrading programmes in India, which tell stories of a community representative system that is supposed to act and be the voice for people but fails to involve them in making decisions that affect their life (Desai, 1996). Consequently, participation, in reality, may not achieve social inclusion and local solidarity, therefore failing to attain democratic decision making and power sharing (Lowndes& Wilson, 2001; Peck and Tickell, 2002; Jones, 2003).

Related to civil society groups, Sengupta and Sharma (2012, p. 236) raise concerns about the dialectical character in the relationship between participation and inclusiveness. To the authors, challenges result from rigid funding and organizational systems, which lead to the client – patron relationship and the tension between emancipation and control. Moreover, NGOs may affect

relations between communities and local government by dominating the voices of squatter communities and grassroots organizations, or lessening the role of community leaders (ibid). The desire to empower thus rests in how to balance the provision of necessary technical assistance and effective community empowerment. From an individual's perspective, personal participation and contacts may lead to a deterioration in trust and risk the loss of collective endeavours (Sengupta & Sharma, 2012).

Overall, in weaving the general social capital literature and the housing focus, a question one may ask is how bonding, bridging and linking relations operate in a community-based upgrading process. To put it differently, what investment mechanisms can be used to mobilize resources from bonding, bridging and linking ties to achieve a community-based upgrading process? In putting social capital in the context of housing issues, the question may be is there is any connection between non-social aspects (e.g., housing, or a spatial dimension of a neighbourhood) and the generation of social capital in a participatory process? In the context of a paucity of research exploring social capital as applied in urban upgrading projects, there is a need to examine the role of civil-society networks in promoting community-based upgrading practices. Questions to be answered include whether community-based projects in urban areas really build on and have contributed to their existing networks; in what conditions do external civic-networks influence communities' bonding ties; and why, how and in whose interests civil-society organizations have now become particularly essential? Responses to these questions will address the weakness of existing social capital accounts (see Cannone, 2009; Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones, 2002; Nyamori et al., 2012). Another question prompted by the critical view of persisting challenges of a participatory process, is if a participatory process based on the enhancement of social capital can help overcome these difficulties, how is social capital generated, associated and maintained in a participatory process to enable community empowerment in linking relations. These questions shaped this research.

2.4 Conclusion

The chapter reviews the multifaceted discussions associated with the development and evolution of social capital theory, the concept of community participation and community-based urban upgrading networks. A number of ways have been offered to understand the meaning and components of social capital at different levels of society; different approaches to distinguishing or combining factors of the civil society and state to understand social capital formation. Especially the three dimensions of bonding, bridging and linking social capital. In addition, the meaning of social capital in relation to the community participation concept and community-based urban upgrading networks has been examined. The chapter has also investigated the implications of the three

dimensions of social capital in community-based urban upgrading networks, with consideration of the challenges of participatory approaches. The existing limitations of social capital theory have been identified as the foundation for the study's position. Based on the insights from existing literature and considering the existing theoretical gaps, the study uses three social capital concepts, namely, bonding, bridging and linking capital as a general framework to explore how two ACCA housing projects have been implemented in Vietnam. The following chapter will discuss the research methodology that was used to conduct the study.

Chapter 3

Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the research methodology used to address the research questions posed in chapter 1. The chapter structure, therefore, follows the sequence of a logical research plan as identified by Yin (2009, p. 26) as a guideline for "getting from here to there", in which, "here" is understood as the initial set of questions to be answered and "there" is some set of conclusions about the questions. The next section introduces the research inquiry and approach that justifies the following sections on the choice of research methods, case selection, data collection, analysis and reporting. Considerations to ensure the research quality are presented before the chapter concludes with a summary.

3.2 The research inquiry and approach

As discussed in chapter 1, the research inquiry stemmed from the attempt to explore how social relations could be mobilized as resources to address the prevailing issue of urban slums, as recommended by the emerging community-based urban upgrading networks. The research was equally motivated by the intention to study the Vietnamese ACCA housing projects that have been claimed to be collectively implemented by local communities to understand how the context of Vietnam may have influenced the nature of the formation and use (mobilisation) of social capital in these projects. Because my study originated from a given general theoretical foundation and sought to understand how it applies in a real life context, it was neither inductive nor deductive; rather it defined itself as a "confirmatory type", borrowing the words of Gray (2013, p. 269).

Specifically, the exploratory purpose of the research resulted from the absence of "a clear or single set of outcomes" having been established for the Vietnamese ACCA housing projects. Although several relevant academic case studies had been conducted about the ACCA upgrading approach in Asian countries (Archer, 2010b, Ley et al., 2016), the contexts of these case studies were different from those in Vietnam. Most of these studies addressed different questions about the upgrading process. For example, the study by Natakun (2013) investigated Thai upgrading projects from the perspective of the incremental development of outcomes in terms of social, physical and political empowerment. Other studies focused on the ACCA approaches in measuring urban poverty (Boonyabancha & Kerr, 2015), and the transnational network of community-based initiatives (Ley et

al., 2015). The study by Archer (2010b) is relevant to this research because it similarly used social capital to explore intra-community ties, inter-community ties, and state-community linkages in Thai upgrading projects. However, the replication of that study's findings in the Vietnamese cases was difficult because of the differing context of the two countries. Though Thai case studies were implemented by a governmental entity, the ones in this study were implemented by a voluntary association network (see chapter 4). This difference necessitated the exploration of the Vietnamese cases to understand the divergent nature of stakeholders' relations.

To explore how social relations functioned in the targeted projects, the research utilized social capital theory because the theory embeds concepts that explain how social relations function as resources for collective societal outcomes; the review of social capital concepts and theory therefore, formed the "theoretical stance" for the research design process (see Gray, 2013, p.270). However, as reviewed in chapter 2, the chosen theoretical stance (social capital theory) does not allow a defined and testable conceptual framework because of the weakness of existing social capital accounts (i.e., the lack of a comprehensive framework that incorporates multifaceted aspects of social relations; the undefined relationship between different social capital dimensions, particularly in related to an urban governance process, etc.) (see section 2.2). Consequently, the research did not intend to follow a theory testing approach, but rather attempted to confirm the given theoretical stance that suggests different ways of looking at social capital. Among those ways, my study utilized the framework of three social capital dimensions: bonding, bridging and linking social capital, because these are regarded as the "most promising development" in social capital theory for enabling a "more complex and robust re-theorization of how social capital components (trust, networks and social norms) intertwine" (Füzer & Monostori, 2012, p. 32). Indeed, this theoretical suggestion enables my study to examine and confirm how other aspects of social capital, such as social capital components, levels, and formation approaches, operate in each dimension of bonding, bridging and linking by exploring a real-life practice (i.e., the collective housing projects). Such a confirmatory purpose, therefore, enabled the provision of alternative theoretical implications that filled gaps in the existing theoretical view and helped answer the research questions (see Gray, 2013).

The reliance of exploratory research on a theoretical position is justifiable because, according to Yin (2009, p. 28), exploration should still have some purpose. Other scholars like Eisenhardt (1989) and Wolcott (1994, p. 157), similarly state that it is impossible for researchers to start with a clean theoretical slate or to embark upon research without some idea of what one is looking for. The

importance lies in the researcher's awareness to ensure the study's exploratory purpose remains and therefore not bring theoretical preconceptions into the data collection inappropriately.

3.3 The choice of research methods

The research inquiry and approach presented above led to exploratory case studies as the key methodological approach. The following sub-sections explains why the research used case studies and why the case studies were qualitative.

3.3.1 Why a case study approach?

Han Eysenck (1976, cited in Flyvbjerg, 2006) stated that: "Sometimes we simply have to keep our eyes open and look carefully at individual cases – not in the hope of proving anything, but rather in the hope of learning something". The research followed this philosophy and employed a case study method to explore two community-based housing upgrading projects in Vietnam. This decision was based on the suitability of the case study method's characteristics for the research purpose.

Case studies, according to Yin (2009, p. 18), offer an in-depth investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context which helps to answer 'how' and 'why' questions. This characteristic allows a case study approach to explore and analyse an extensive series of details of (an) individual unit(s) in relation to the environment, a "bounded system" (Stake 1978, p. 7). Such a system comprises a string of interrelated and specific events that occur at such a time and in such a place and finally constitute the case as a whole (see Eisenhardt, 1989). The case study method was well-suited to this study, first, because it corresponded with the study objective to investigate a contemporary phenomenon (the collective ACCA housing projects) within its real life context. Secondly, by following the case study method, the study could acquire a good range of details and enable intensive analysis to investigate crucial contextual conditions pertinent to urban housing upgrading issues in Vietnamese cities (see Yin & Davis, 2007; Yin, 2009, p. 18). Thirdly, the approach enabled the exploration of the behaviour of participants in the wider setting of the studied cases and also the sequence, processes and features of events of the projects in which the behaviour occurred.

The case study approach, nonetheless, has been traditionally viewed as "lacking rigour and objectivity" (Rowley, 2002, p. 16). Criticisms claim that a small number of cases cannot offer any grounds for establishing reliability or generality of findings, and that the researcher's intense exposure to the case(s) biases the findings. However, the study's objective leant itself to an approach that was likely to provide data richness capable of yielding exploratory insights rather than to sum up in large implications, or to search for predictive theories and universals (see Peattie, 2001,

Flyvbjerg, 2006). In this way, the study provided, borrowing the words of Flyvbjerg's (2011, p. 301), "context-dependent and specific knowledge". Such a detailed examination of two cases might not have offered reliable information but contributed to suggesting, in a preliminary investigation, useful hypotheses to be later tested with a larger number of cases. Indeed, the study has provided insightful findings that may enable future systematic and comparative investigations with a bigger number of cases beyond the context of Vietnam (i.e., community-based urban upgrading projects in other countries).

3.3.2 Why a qualitative method?

Case study research can be "based on any mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches" (Rowley, 2002, p. 18). The decision to follow a quantitative or qualitative design, nonetheless, depends on the "philosophical assumptions underlying the research intention" (Sarantakos, 2005, pp. 29-37). My study's case studies use qualitative methods because of their ability to gain rich, context-specific data suitable to the study objective, as opposed to examining predetermined hypotheses and variables that are quantifiable and normally found in experimental research (see, for instance Willis & Jost, 2007). Indeed, the qualitative method has had a long tradition within anthropology, sociology and education; its usefulness has been found to "depend on the knowledge claiming inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 43; Yin, 2011; Mills & Birks, 2014, p. 24). The method's suitability stems from its effectiveness in studying the meaning of people's life under real-world conditions (Yin, 2011). By engaging researchers in natural settings, qualitative methods bring them close to the reality to "extract a nuanced view of true life instances" (Flyvbjerg 2011, p. 303). Because of this feature, a qualitative method, in most cases, helps to answer questions like what, how and why (Creswell, 2013). According to Yin (2011, p. 8), robust qualitative methods are based on "multiple sources of evidence" rather than just a single source to provide meaningful data. In addition, qualitative research utilizes different techniques such as in-depth interviews, observations, document reviews in order to capture a thorough understanding of non-numeric, unstructured and contextual information (Yin, 2011). For this study, the qualitative methods were useful in providing insights into existing or emerging concepts that helped to explain the behaviour and views of participants involved in the housing projects based on their contextual conditions. Following the method's guidelines regarding data sources and data collection techniques, the research could gather useful information from participants about what they wanted to say rather than their responses to structured questionnaires. Viewpoints and perspectives of participants were captured through their words and body language, which, according to Creswell (2015), are important because researchers can hear the tone of voices, and feel the emotions and experiences of these people (see 3.5.3 for details about interviews and the use of open ended questions). The case studies may share

certain similarities with ethnographic studies because both types of research seek a rich, full understanding of the studied context (Willis & Jost, 2007). However, it is important to distinguish qualitative case studies with "ethnographic and other strictly qualitative research paradigms" (see Rowley, 2002, p. 18). These strictly qualitative studies, normally found in anthropology, aim to gather data in an authentic environment through the researcher's direct observation in the studied setting during the whole process (see for example Bernard, 2011). My case studies do not follow this type of study because its purpose is studying the processes that have been accomplished.

Overall, the use of a qualitative method significantly guided this research to answer the "how" question by shedding light on the real life circumstances of the studied housing projects, and the Vietnamese Community Development Fund network (VNCDF network) under which the two projects were implemented.

3.4 Case selection.

The research followed a comparative-case approach, or cross-case analysis (see Thomas, 2015) to examine holistic ACCA housing projects in two neighbourhoods of two different cities. This methodological decision was determined by the study's hybrid purpose to search for exploratory data and to confirm given theoretical implications. The study of two housing projects explicitly functioned as multiple experiments to explore insights from bounded systems through in-depth data collection, which contributed to providing more compelling, robust evidence for analysis (Creswell et al., 2007).

To select the case studies, instead of a "sampling logic normally used in surveys" (Yin, 2009, p. 55), a replication logic was adopted. In particular, the purposefully selected cases addressed this concern and allowed either literal replication (if they produce similar results) or theoretical replication (if they produced contrasting results) (see Rowley, 2002, Yin, 2009; 2011). Specifically, the selection decision was based on the following criteria:

1. The cases belonged to the housing component of the Vietnamese ACCA programme.

This criterion was based on the intention to study social relations advocated by community-based urban upgrading approaches. Drawing on a preliminary literature review, the case selection targeted the housing projects implemented in the ACCA programme of the Asian Coalition of Housing Rights (ACHR) (described in chapter 4). Among the ACCA projects implemented in various Asian countries, the Vietnamese ACCA housing projects were selected because, based on expert consultation and project document review (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2015), they were unprecedented in the

country and therefore require a comprehensive, independent academic study. The exploration of Vietnamese cases promised to shed light on social capital concepts based on contextualized perspectives. In addition, the selection of Vietnamese cases was made in consideration of a home-based research's benefits in terms of information access, local cultural knowledge, language and family support. The selection of Vietnamese cases also enabled the contribution of academic insight into the country's contemporary phenomena.

2. The upgrading processes were collectively implemented by the beneficiary neighbourhoods.

This criterion stemmed from the research's focus on exploring how social relations operated in a collective process. Therefore, not all Vietnamese ACCA housing projects could be selected, only those that were, or at least were reported to be, collectively implemented. Information about these specific projects was obtained by a preliminary project document review and consultation with experts during the development of the research design at the beginning of the preliminary fieldwork (to be described later)

3. The projects' upgrading process had been completed by the time of the research field trip.

This criterion enabled a comprehensive understanding of relationships in the project as a whole. However, because of the fact that the project loan payment process could last 2 years after the upgrading work had been completed, the research aimed only at projects in which the upgrade was complete.

4. The selected cases represented distinctive local geographical and socio-economic conditions.

To enable the robustness of findings to contribute to theoretical implications (if any), the cases were intentionally chosen to demonstrate distinctive local contexts in terms of housing issues, geographical and socio-economic conditions. Among the three projects reported to be collectively implemented, two projects were located in the same Northern Delta Region. Therefore one of them was selected together with a project in the Southern Mekong Delta Region (see chapter 4)

5. The cases represented major public land-related housing issues in Vietnamese cities.

This criterion refers to the fourth criterion and would help provide theoretical implications if the cases provided similar results. In addition, the different housing issues manifested in the cases could provide a comprehensive picture of upgrading issues in Vietnam. Accordingly, the two housing case studies represented two major issues in Vietnam. The first housing issue featured degraded public residential areas in northern cities that were developed before the national 1986 economic reforms.

The second housing issue accented illegal settlements in southern cities along the canal system of the Mekong Delta Region; these areas had been established since the early 1990s.

Among the criteria discussed above, criteria 1, 2, and 3 referred to literal replication logic and anticipated that cases of similar conditions would produce similar results for the research question (Yin, 2009, p.59). Criteria 4 and 5 were aimed at producing more powerful evidence if the cases of distinctive conditions produced similar research findings (see Soy, 1997; Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Following these criteria, the two selected case studies comprised the housing project of the Friendship neighbourhood in Vinh city (case 1) and the housing project of the Binh Dong 1 neighbourhood in Tan An city (case 2) (Fig. 3.1). Both projects belonged to the Vietnamese ACCA programme's housing programme and were reported to have been collectively implemented. Case 1 represented the issue of degraded public residential areas in northern cities. Case 2 represented the issue of illegal settlements in cities along the southern Mekong delta. A more detailed description of the cases' context and conditions will be presented in chapters 4 and 5. These cases did not reflect the entire universe of Vietnamese ACCA housing projects but were selected to address the research questions.

Figure 3.1: Case studies' location
(Source: Google image, 12/2016, information added by the researcher, a cleaner copy of the map is included in the appendix D)

3.5 Data collection

3.5.1 Two-phase fieldwork procedure

The fieldwork took place in Vietnam and consisted of two stages. The design of the two stage-field work stemmed from the need to define the research design and the scope of case studies, which involved different levels of stakeholders in the neighbourhoods, city governments and the national VNCDF network.

The first fieldwork took place from April to July 2014. It was aimed at finalizing the research design and the collection of data at the national network and city government levels. The finalization of research design was attempted in the first half of the first fieldwork. During this stage, preliminary work was conducted to finalize the research questions, methods, suitable case studies, lists of interviewees of the national network and city governments. Preliminary work included project document review, consultation with experts and personal observation. In parallel, I also participated in a number of VNCDF's important events where I obtained an understanding of the case studies' overall context in terms of the VNCDF network, ACCA programme, the wider context of Vietnamese urban sector, and the roles of the national government and international agencies in national urban upgrading programmes. Inputs from the preliminary work and participation in these activities significantly helped me develop the research design that was finalized based on the comments and suggestions of key project managers and staff members.

Data collection at the national network and city government level happened in the second half of the first field work period (starting the last week of May 2014). Interviews were conducted with professionals in and around ACVN. Interviews with city government officials of the two case studies then followed in July 2014.

Apart from the interview time, I was based in the ACVN Hanoi office[6] on a daily basis and therefore was able to access and review relevant project documents and obtain observational data about the operation of the network management team. Information gained in the first fieldtrip's data collection also provided me with a feeling for the particular issues that I might encounter at the neighbourhood level in the later field stage.

[6] The Association of Cities of Vietnam office was the researcher's employing organization before commencing her research and remained supportive. ACVN collaborates with the Asian Coalition of Housing Rights (ACHR) to manage the Community Development Fund network in Vietnam.

The second fieldwork took place from 25 November 2014 to 25 February 2015. It was aimed at collecting data in the two study neighbourhoods, the Friendship Neighbourhood in Vinh city and the Binh Dong 1 Neighbourhood in Tan An city. The first fieldwork was intentionally planned to be in mid-year when national conferences are normally organized and government officials are less busy with yearly reports, the second fieldwork timing was intentionally conducted in later months of the year because neighbourhood residents were likely to be at home in the time close to the lunar New Year[7]. The second fieldwork session was mostly based on interviews with participants in the cities and neighbourhoods. The first fieldwork was more formal and the second fieldwork featured a more friendly informal approach. In this way (accepting invitations to stay and have meals at the residents' homes), I integrated myself into local life, became closer to the local people and achieved more fruitful insights into the case studies.

3.5.2 Approaching the participants

Because of the local context, consideration of how to approach research participants was necessary for my study. For city government participants, I needed an official introduction paper from ACVN and consultation with the leader's secretary to arrange a possible interview time. Field visits to the neighbourhoods were arranged via contact persons introduced by the ACVN office. A potential risk in this arrangement was that the neighbourhood residents would find it difficult to respond naturally because they did not want to give offence to the contact person. However, within a Vietnamese context, coming to a neighbourhood with an introduction of someone trusted or known by the residents was important to get their cooperation. To avoid potential information bias, interview techniques were used to ensure that the information provided had real value. Consequently, the contact people helped only to take me to the neighbourhood and introduced the area to me; I approached the interviewees by myself. Interviewees for case 1 were approached by door knocking, whereas, in case 2, I met a large group of residents at the first meeting and was able to make interview appointments with them. Some residents helped to pass on the research information sheets and interview consent forms to those who were absent from the first meeting. Because both cases consisted of a small number of families, I could arrange most of the expected interviews in the first few days, except some with those who were away. The interviews were scheduled in the following days after the interview objective had been introduced and the consent forms had been signed.

[7] Also known as the Chinese New Year (lunar calendar), normally in early February.

3.5.3 Data types

As discussed above, multiple sourced evidence is essential for a case study of a qualitative and exploratory type (see Neuman, 2009, p. 13). This research acquired data from multiple sources based on both primary and secondary evidence. Primary sources included interviews, observational data; secondary sources included artefacts, documents and media publications.

Interviews

Interviews served as the main source of information for this research. In recognition of the rich nature of qualitative research data, Yin (2009) and N. Newton (2010) note that interviews are essential and provide remarkably detailed information. To achieve this, I conducted in-depth and semi-structured interviews. In-depth interviews focused on details of the VNCDF network and the ACCA programme's housing component. These interviews were conducted at the initial stage with key informants of the national project team in order to explore their opinions of the overall network and the case studies. Information from in-depth interviews was useful in suggesting further inquiries in subsequent interviews. Semi-structured interviews were mainly conducted with other stakeholders directly involved in the housing project, including experts, local government and residents of the housing projects. The semi-structured interviews used open-ended questions prepared in the interview guides.

Interview guides (see appendix C) were designed for the different groups of participants, but covered similar basic sections. Based on the study's confirmatory and exploratory purposes, the interview guides served as a checklist of topics to be discussed in the interviews. Specifically, the interviews, as discussed above, followed preliminary insights into social capital theory and the ACCA housing projects, but simultaneously, allowed "sufficient flexibility" and "grounded implication", borrowing the words of Noor (2008). Drawing from the suggestion of Babbie (2007, p. 306), questions asked in the interviews were not standardised, but rather open-ended to capture emerging details from the field.

Interviewee

A total of 52 interviews were conducted over the more than four months of data collection. Interviewees included: (1) members of the VNCDF network management team at regional, national and city level (17 interviews); (2) ACVN's international and domestic partners (7 interviews); (3) urban experts (3 interviews); and (4) residents of the two project neighbourhoods (25 interviews, including 12 for case 1 and 9 for case 2). Participants at national and city level were identified through document reviews and consultation with project informants. The number of interviews with

neighbourhood residents was settled based on the suggestion by Mitlin (2008) that interviews with about half of the households were sufficiently helpful for in-depth qualitative analysis of small neighbourhoods.

Interview process

The research interviews were conducted in a way that enabled participants to demonstrate their insights into the open-ended questions. As noted by Creswell (2013, p.8), the success and validity of an interview rests on the extent to which respondents' opinions were truly reflected by their voice and attitude. To do this, I listened carefully to the answers and used probing questions like: "Would you give me an example? How was it? Can you explain more? Is there anything else? What could have been better?" to seek out additional constructive information. Figure 3.2 illustrates an interview with a resident.

There were some occasions when I interviewed a group of two people. During the interview, while directing attention to one of the people who was talking, I still respected the other's equivalent role and involved him/her in the discussion when possible. During this process, I played the role of a moderator, trying to induce all members to express their opinions but with minimum direction, as guided by Yin (2011, p.141).

Interviews lasted 30 to 60 minutes and were done either in a formal (city hall, ministry office, or ACVN office) or informal setting (dinner time, cafés, and residential areas). In most cases, the interviews progressed into friendly conversations in which the respondents' emotions were naturally expressed. Most interviews were recorded, including those with government officials and project staff. Notes were taken during interviews when participants did not feel comfortable being recorded. At the end of all interviews, I expressed my appreciation and asked for the respondents' future support to clarify information if necessary. During data analysis, information from some of the interviews was supplemented through phone calls to or skype with the respondent.

Figure 3.2: Interview with a project neighbourhood resident (Original)

Observational studies: direct observation and participant-observation

Direct observation provided another important information source for the research. This technique is recommended to enable case study researchers to understand events, activities and interactions in a natural social system (Yin, 2013). I did this both formally and informally. Formal observation occurred when I was researching at the ACVN office or when I attended important project events. Examples are the observed relations among the national network's staff members or between them with those coming from overseas and other localities. Informal observation took place on the project sites. For example, I could observe the shared house structure[8] and recycled materials, the residents gathering in the common space, and the ancient temple where the communities organised their communal meetings.

Participant observation, also known as 'unstructured observation' (Thomas, 2015, p. 165), happens when the researchers immerse themselves in the events as a participant or attend a fruitful discussion constructed on the participants' own terms. Four settings of participant observations emerged during the fieldwork. First, I joined several project events in the role of a note-taker, a translator and an invited participant. Secondly, I joined a number of group chats or gatherings for meals (in- and outside the office) with the project staff. Thirdly, I joined in the neighbourhood's gatherings in the Binh Dong 1 neighbourhood (Figure 3.3). Fourthly, I joined a chat with some residents in the Friendship neighbourhood. Though the observations in project events were formal, the chats or meals with project staff and the neighbourhood gatherings were informal. To illustrate one example, the gathering with the Binh Dong 1 neighbourhood was unplanned and happened on my arrival night. Some residents were gathering around a table when I arrived. After introductions, people continued with their chatting. I participated as a member of the group, observing and asking probing questions when people were talking about the project. Some information was noted after

[8] Houses in Friendship neighbourhood project were built with common detached walls and foundations.

the discussion, which significantly helped me prompt questions in the following interviews (Figure 3.3).

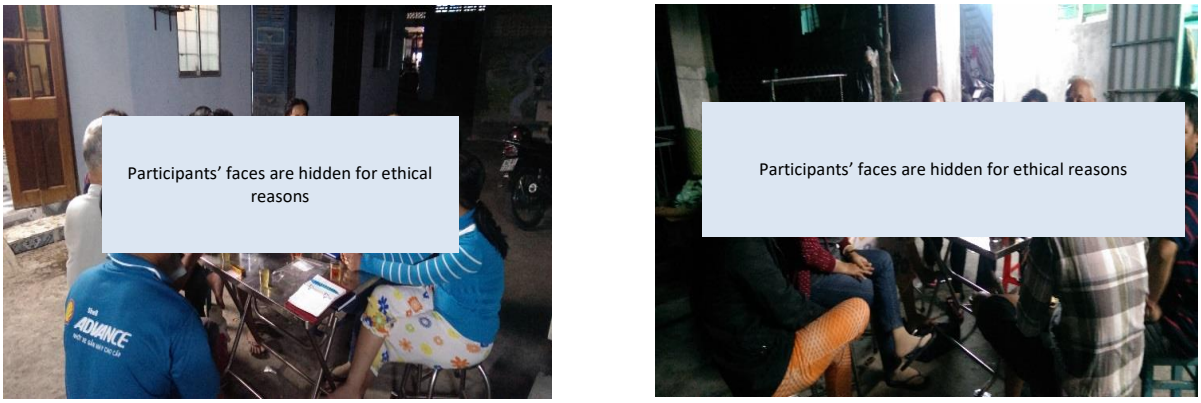

Figure 3.3: Participant observation in community discussion (Original)

Secondary sources: Artefacts, document, media

Secondary sources were of two types: artefacts and documents. The first comprised 'things' collected/shown by the local communities, for example, the approved house plans, the residents' letters to the provincial government, written poems, the monthly loan repayment list and the construction diary. These materials did not function as documents to provide me textual data, but equipped me with proof of what had happened and how participants interacted with each other during the process. They provided me with more in-depth perspectives about the events than I was able to observe. These insights, nevertheless, did not serve as the study's definitive findings, but were carefully compared with information from interviews and observations.

Another secondary source were project documents developed by organizations like ACHR, ACVN, World Bank and UN-Habitat, and city governments. They included newsletters, journal publications and project reports, independent evaluations, Vietnamese urbanization profiles, Vietnamese housing profiles, Vietnamese urban upgrading programme reports, conference handouts, pictures and multimedia clips. Because of the likelihood of organizational bias, these documents largely functioned as background sources to guide the research design and to prompt interview questions. In addition, they provided some factual sources for the case studies, including time lines, terminologies and other information in terms of the historical, political, cultural and social contexts. Inputs based on these secondary sources conjointly served to corroborate and augment evidence from primary sources like interviews and observations. A specific example is the World Bank's

evaluation report of the ACCA upgrading approach[9]. Information from this document was compared with regional and national project documents, city reports and the project staff's mission notes. To ensure the effective and efficient use of all these materials, I adopted a systematic searching and reviewing plan throughout the study's phases.

3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis is aimed at discovering data patterns, making sense of them and telling a logical story (Babbie, 2007, p. 378). Drawing on Yin (2009, 2014), data analysis followed four steps: defining a general analytic strategy; categorizing information into codes, themes and patterns; synthesizing cases (cross-case synthesis); and interpreting data (Fig. 3.5).

To start, the research adopted a combined analytical strategy, relying on both theoretical propositions and emerging implications from the fieldwork. The reliance on theoretical propositions and grounded implications are treated as two distinctive analytical strategies. However, as stated by Yin (2013, pp. 136-137), they can be combined to serve a particular research purpose. Following this combined strategy, data analysis was based on a theoretical descriptive framework of three social capital dimensions (bonding, bridging and linking) with insights arising from the field, which, as discussed previously, were achieved by open-ended questions and observations.

Once the research analytical strategy was defined, specific analytical steps were followed. The first step was to categorize the data into patterns, codes and themes. Such a process is described by Bryman & Burgess (2002) as creating links between the data and conceptualized knowledge. This task was conducted in two phases after each period of fieldwork. For each phase, the first step was to place the available data in chronological order. The data were then reviewed and scanned to provide an overall general picture. Subsequently, I searched for emerging insights, which were then sorted and categorized into codes; the several codes then interconnected with each other into a theme and gathered into patterns. At the end of this process, each housing project formed a separate qualitative case study. The conceptualized data (a general uniform set of themes categorized from the data of the case studies) were presented in an Excel table, based on the theoretical descriptive template illustrating the three dimensions of social capital relationships, namely bonding, bridging and linking social capital (see chapter 5,6,7). After the first step had been completed for both fieldwork data sets, the second step followed to compare the developed concept tables. This task is called "pattern matching" (Trochim 1989), which aims to compare

[9] The World Bank is a major actor involved in worldwide upgrading programmes, however, its approach is different from the one advocated by the Asian Coalition of Community Actions (ACCA) programme.

theoretically predicted patterns with empirical observations. The results show that the predicted theoretical propositions were both confirmed and rejected. Alternative theoretical implications also emerged from the analysis (see chapter 8). Based on the research's findings, three tables of codes and themes on the formation of bonding, bridging and linking capital have been developed, which is useful for the use of Nvivo software in future qualitative research (see table 5.1, 6.1 and 7.1).

The third step was the development of a cross-case synthesis, which served as the study's main technique for analysing multiple case studies. This technique, by its nature, allows robustness and generalisability of the results obtained in pattern matching (Yin, 2009, pp. 156-160; Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 173; Yin, 2013, pp. 164-167). Accordingly, the implications of the similarities and differences across the two case studies were drawn based on the synthesis of the two concept tables developed in step one. For example, the synthesized tables showed similarities in the changes in the relationships of the two neighbourhoods' residents in the upgrading process. Simultaneously, there were differences in the project leading roles of the two neighbourhoods. Based on these similarities and differences between the two case studies, theoretical implications were drawn, particularly in consideration of the cases' distinctive socio-economic circumstances (see chapter 8). On completion of this step, as described by Neuman (1991) and Kohlbacher (2006), I moved from the descriptions of the studied social settings to a more general interpretation of their meaning, which is the fourth step presented below.

The fourth step was to interpret the analysed data. For this study, cross-case implications were based on the qualitative analysis and developed text tables. In this way, data interpretation was argumentative instead of depending on numeric tallies (see Yin, 2013, p. 167). Data interpretation was crucial, thereby requiring good quality evidence to ensure strong, fair insights into how the social relations were generated, associated and maintained in the implemented collective upgrading.

3.7 Reporting the case studies:

Reporting a case study is noted by Baxter & Jack (2008, p. 555) to be difficult because of the need to concisely turn complex phenomena into something readily understood by the reader. A case study report needs to function as a communication device for not only specialized experts but also the wider public (Yin, 2013, p. 182). These suggestions prompted my efforts to deliver a meaningful message to all readers. Based on the data analysis outputs, the result chapters (chapters 5, 6, and 7) were structured according to the three social capital dimensions of bonding, bridging and linking relations. Insights from each case study were presented in parallel under each specific theme (Fig. 3.5). Discussions on the theoretical implications of the results are presented in chapter 8.

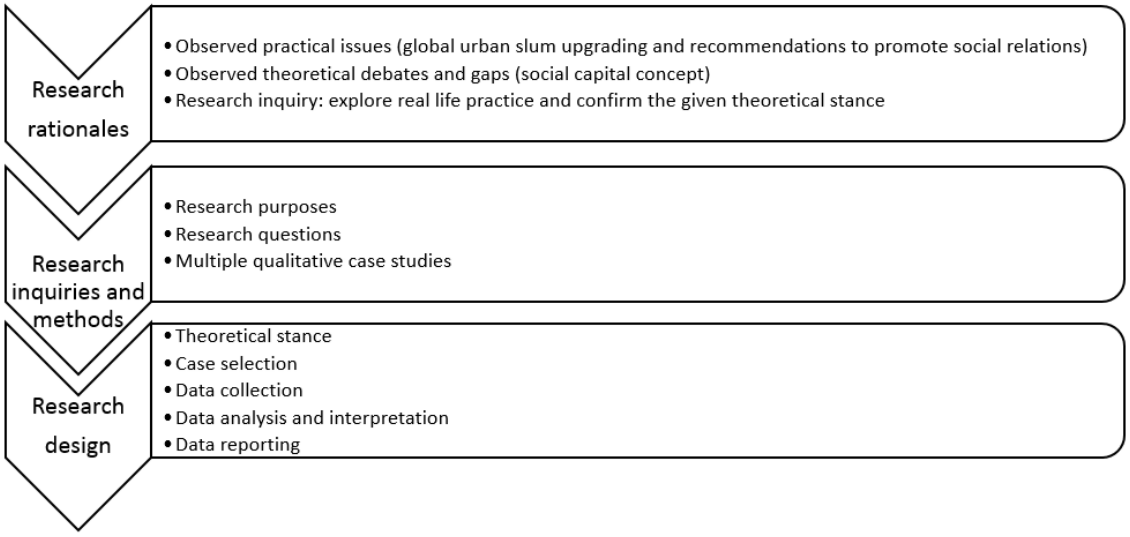

Figure 3.4: The research process (Original)

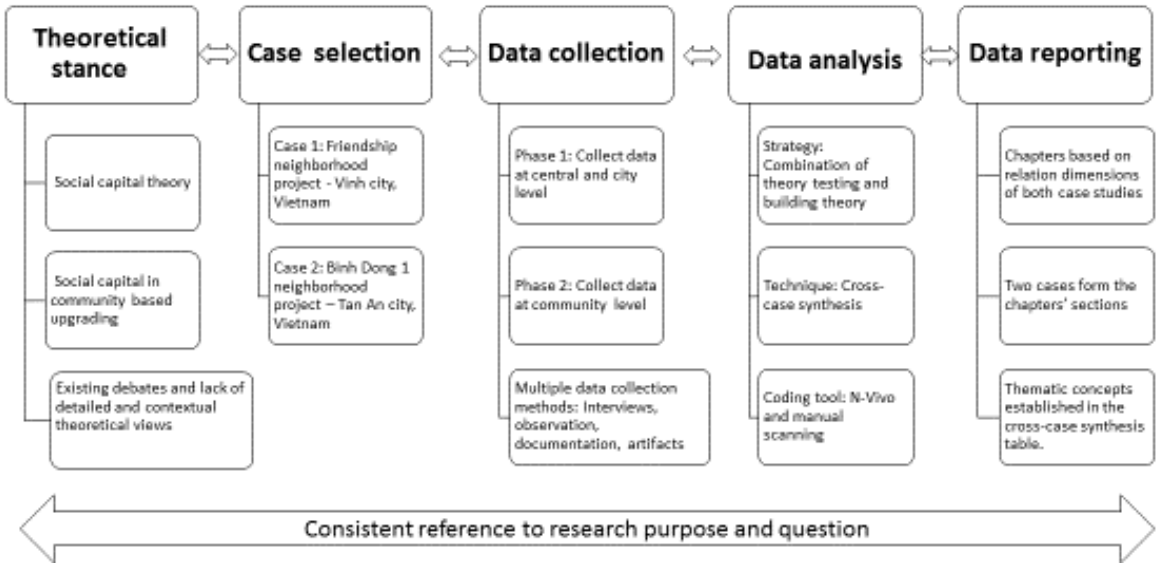

Figure 3.5: The research design (Original)

3.8 Research quality considerations

To ensure research quality, attention was paid to ensure research trustworthiness, proper working with the data and the ethics. The following elaborates these requirements.

3.8.1 Research trustworthiness: validity and reliability

The study ensures its trustworthiness, also known as the truth-value or credibility (see Yin, 2009; 2011, Thomas, 2015), by considering the requirements of research validity and reliability.

Research validity comprises internal validity, construct validity and external validity (Rowley, 2002). Internal validity does not apply to this research because it establishes a causal relationship between factors in causal or explanatory studies (ibid). Construct validity is essential for the study because it ensured proper utilization of the research concepts (i.e., social capital concepts including bonding, bridging and linking relations), which helped develop a suitable research design, develop interview guides and a descriptive template for data analysis and report. In parallel, the validity of the research concepts was strengthened by attention paid to the basic elements of a study such as putting clear research questions, adopting appropriate research methods, selecting suitable cases, systematically collecting, analysing and reporting data. These areas are largely emphasized to set a solid foundation for research validity and credibility (see Golafshani, 2003). External validity enables a study's findings to be generalized. Because this research is not comprehensively informed by theory, it does not attempt to generalize to established theory. Therefore, external validity is not applicable for this study.

Reliability is normally not considered for case study research (Thomas, 2015). However, this term is used in this study to mean a reliable process that helped produce useable research data. Indeed, this requirement was ensured by careful documentation of the research procedures. In addition, a plan to systematically record research steps and manage research documents was adopted throughout the study process.

3.8.2 Working with the data

Aside from a study's trustworthiness, the way of working with the data was important to ensure the study's quality. To fulfil this requirement, I paid significant attention to keeping the collected data safely. After each interview, I typed the notes and/or transcribed the interview clips at the earliest opportunity while they were still fresh in my mind. The notes and transcriptions, together with other digital files, were then categorized, stored and backed up. This work was done and/or checked after each data collection event during the fieldwork.

Working with the data also meant using analysis software. Attempting to mobilize technological assistance to increase work efficiency, I initially used N-Vivo software to analyse the data collected in the first fieldwork. However, I eventually realized that the N-Vivo system was not suitable because of the emergence of significant unexpected themes from the data. Also, because the data input was a translated language, the coding could not rely on the matching between the given set of codes and located words and phrases in the textual data. Therefore, mostly I manually reviewed and coded the research data. Consequently, the N-Vivo system mainly served as a file storage system, rather than a tool for automated analysis.

3.8.3 Ethical consideration

In general, ethical consideration is essential for social research and was for my study. However, the consideration applies differently across different groups of participants. Under Lincoln University's Human Ethics Committee (HEC) guidelines, there was no need for ethical approval for interviews with professionals in the areas of their duties and competence (Lincoln University, 2014). Therefore, this procedure did not apply for the study's field work in which data were collected from professionals in organizations and city governments. Ethical approval was required for the second lot of fieldwork because data were collected from local communities. Although a human ethics procedure was not applied in the first fieldwork, participants in all fieldwork were informed of the voluntary nature of their participation and that they could withdraw from the interviews and/or the study at any time before the thesis's publication. An information sheet and interview consent form (see appendix A and B) were provided to all participants before interviews.

Participants' anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed as per the interview consent and research procedure requirements. Babbie (2007, p. 65) explains this as when the researcher can identify a given person's responses but essentially promise not to do so publicly. To achieve this, a participant's identity was coded for presentation of their quotes. Data of the names, contacts,

original recordings and transcriptions were securely stored by, and only accessible to, the researcher.

3.9 Chapter summary

Collectively, this chapter describes and justifies the procedures and steps followed to provide an effective and insightful process to answer the research question. Specifically, information on how and why two housing case studies were adopted is discussed in terms of the logic behind the adoption of the research methods, case selection, research quality considerations, data collection, analysis and report. A summary of content presented in the chapter is illustrated in the Figures 3.4 and 3.5. The following chapter will provide a general context of the case studies to set a foundation context for the results presented in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 4

Research context

4.1 Introduction

Before presenting the research data, a background of the context in which the case studies operate is necessary to make sense of information introduced in the following chapters. This chapter serves that purpose by setting out a general context for the research. The chapter is structured around three main sections. First, the chapter briefly introduces the Vietnamese socio-political conditions. Second, the Vietnamese urban system is presented, encapsulating urban classification, urban upgrading needs and the Association of Cities of Vietnam (ACVN). The third section describes the ACCA upgrading programme. The fourth section introduces the case studies. The information provided in this chapter is based on a review of literature, national policy and project documents.

4.2 Vietnam socio-political conditions in a nutshell

Since 1986, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam has transitioned to a market oriented economy, embarking on a number of market economy and private investment policies, such as land leasing, urban land development[10], and price subsidy abolition (World Bank, 2011; Nguyen et al., 2015). Consequently, since the early 1990s, the relaxed residential policies[11] have caused uncontrolled rural - urban migration and a significant increase in the urban population (McGee, 2000).

The country, nevertheless, remains a one-party centralized system in which the Communist Party of Viet Nam (CPV) holds a monopoly on the political process[12]. The Communist Party is organized at all levels of government and has the highest power to direct national and local development[13]. Under the central government, Vietnamese local authorities are organized into three levels, comprising the provincial level (governments of provinces and mega cities – explained below), district level (governments of cities/towns[14] and rural districts) and commune level (governments of urban wards or rural communes). Local government administration comprises the People's Council (a legislative

[10] The 1993 Land Law was a step toward releasing land into the land and housing market (World Bank, 2011)
[11] Until the late 1980s and early 1990s, urban growth containment in Vietnam was practised for a centralized economy under the Chinese Hukhou system, which legally prevented the rural population from moving to cities (Gottdiener & Huchison, 2010, p. 302).
[12] Article 4, Constitution 1992, 2001, 2013
[13] Article 4, Constitution 1992, 2001, 2013
[14] In Vietnam, there is distinction between a city and a town. Cities refer to urban centres with a rank: special cities, rank I, II, III (see footnote 6). Towns are urban centres of ranks III and IV (see footnote 6).

body) and the People's Committee (an executive body) (see light green boxes in Figure 4.1) The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the People's Committee of urban governments are known as the Executive Heads of the local government, or Mayors and Vice Mayors in other countries. However, these positions in Vietnam are not elected, but selected from among the People's Council members; they are usually nominated by the Vietnam Fatherland Front[15], elected by the people and approved by a higher administrative unit (UNDP, 2004, p. 8). Under the Vietnamese hierarchical system, local entities make decisions that comply with the National Constitution, laws and other legal documents of state organs at higher-levels (Phan, 2012, p.85). Since the early 1990s, the Vietnamese administration system has attempted a deconcentrating process by delegating more tasks and funds from national government to local government (Wescott, 2003). This process has mainly focused on partially transferring power and authority to the Provincial Governments under which most Vietnamese cities operate (World Bank, 2011). The power in the whole system therefore rests in the national government, the Communist Party and provincial government (Wit, 2007, p. 16).

In parallel, local democracy policies have been an important aspect of the national public administration reform to enhance local governments' accountability and encourage people's participation (Sabharwal & Than, 2005). The role of the people in public affairs has long been acknowledged in the National Constitution with slogans like: "Vietnam is a state of the people, for the people and by the people" and "the people need to be informed of, discuss, carry out and supervise public affairs"[16]. People's participation has been well embedded in the country's development plans[17]. In particular, a legal framework on grassroots (local) democracy implementation has been established since 1997 to realize these ideas[18]. The implementation of local democracy policies is advocated by socio-political associations, known as intermediate actors or mass organizations[19] (Ingle & Halimi, 2007). However, these organizations' roles in promoting

[15] The Vietnam Fatherland Front is a voluntary federation of political organizations, social-political organizations, social organizations and outstanding individuals representing the various social classes' strata, ethnic groups, religions and overseas Vietnamese (Art 1, Law of the Vietnam Fatherland Front). The VFF's objectives are to gather and build up a whole-people unity bloc, strengthen the people's political and spiritual consensus, encourage the people to promote their mastership, to implement the CPV's guidelines and policies, and to abide by the Constitution and laws.

[16] Article 2, Constitution 1992, 2001, 2013.

[17] Political report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (the 10th session) at the 11th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

[18] Party Congress Resolution in 1997; Directive No 30-CT/TW in February 18th, 1998 on "Building and implementing the regulations of grassroots democracy"; Decree no 29/1998/NĐ-CP dated 11/5/1998 on "Democracy implementation at communes"; Decree no 79/2003/NĐ-CP dated 7/7/2003 on "Regulation on Democracy implements at communes", replacing Decree no 29; Ordinance no 34/2007/PL-UBTVQH11 on "Democracy implementation in communes, districts and provinces" replacing for the Decree no 79.

[19] Socio-political associations, or mass organizations include Viet Nam Women's Union, Vietnam Youth's Union, the Vietnamese Veterans' Association, and professional associations. Their main function is to assist in the implementation of the Party's guidelines and the government's policies.

people's participation have been largely criticized as ineffective because of legal obstacles and it has been argued that these organizations are part of, and operate based on the funding from, the State public administration system (ibid). In practice, the implementation of local democracy policies has not been easy (UNDP, 2004). This view has been illustrated by a Vietnamese Government official who said: "The current planning system still uses the conventional methods, targets and plans are still set without adequate allocation of financial resources and without broad participation of the community" (cited in De Wit (2007, p.13)).

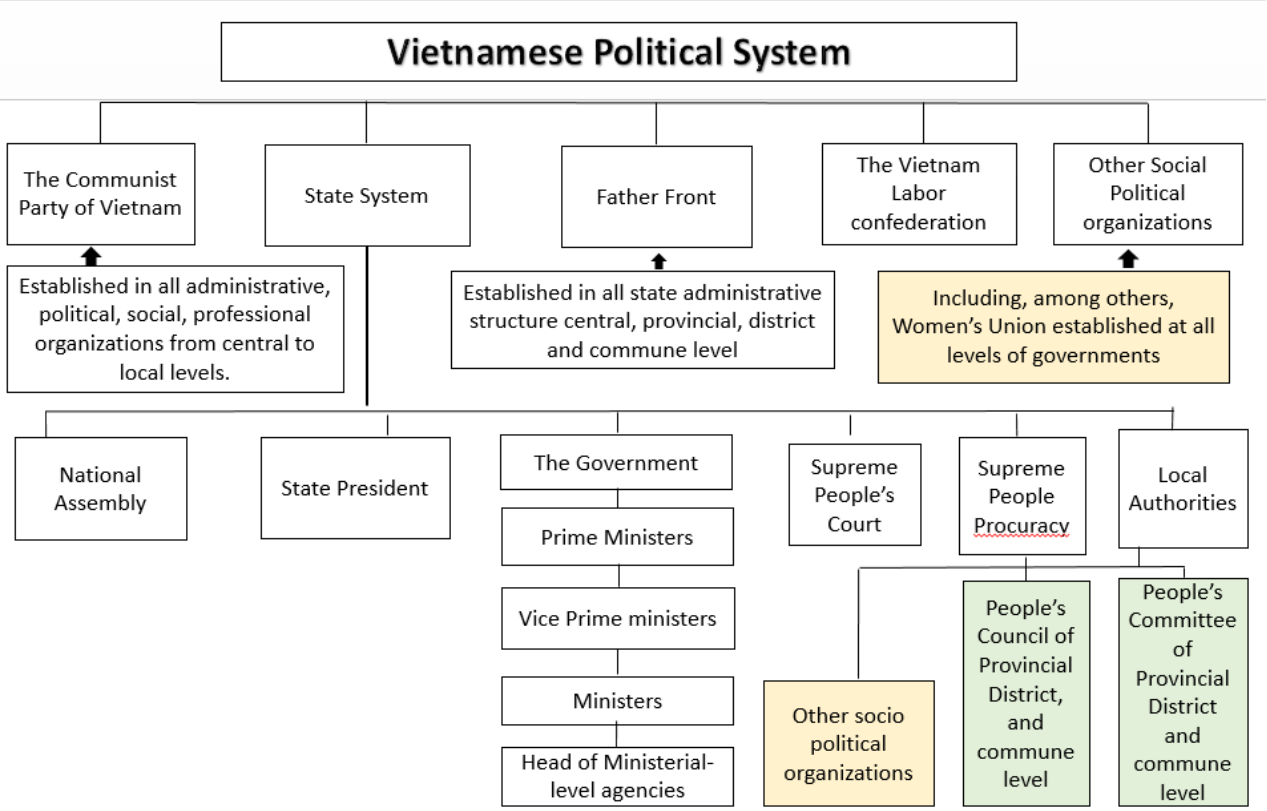

Figure 4.1 Vietnamese political system (Original)

4.3 Vietnamese urban system

This section introduces the Vietnamese urban classification system, urban upgrading needs and the Association of Cities of Vietnam.

4.3.1 Vietnamese urban classification

Vietnamese urban centres are classified into six ranks on the basis of criteria including quantitative indicators (e.g., land area, inhabitants, density, and urban infrastructure system) and qualitative indicators (e.g., economic, educational, cultural circumstances)[20]. Accordingly, Vietnamese urban centres consist of mega cities, known as "special cities" (Ho Chi Minh City and the capital, Hanoi) and those ranking from level I to V. Cities ranking level I can be central cities (directly under the control of national government) or provincial cities (under provincial government)[21]. Apart from central cities (including mega cities and some cities ranking level I), most urban governments operate under the control of provincial governments and have limited authority in decision making and public services' budget (including public transport, infrastructure, health, education) (Albrecht et al., 2010, p. 19). This situation has significantly motivated smaller Vietnamese cities and towns to reach higher urban ranks by promoting urban upgrading programmes – a critical way to fulfil the ranking criteria related to the urban infrastructure[22]. Becoming higher in urban rank, cities have more prerogatives and autonomy with respect to the provincial government, and benefit more from various national and international funding programmes (Albrecht et al., 2010, p. 19; Chau, 2012, pp 147-152, interviews with NP1, 3; RP1).

4.3.2 Urban upgrading in Vietnam

Major urban upgrading programmes in Vietnamese cities are featured in the national urban upgrading programme (NUUP), mainly funded by the World Bank, but with other smaller components funded by a range of international and domestic donors/investors. In the early 2000s, a

[20] Based on the Decree No 42/2009/NĐ-CP dated on 27/5/2009.

[21] By 2011, there were in total 755 urban centres including 2 special (mega) cities, 10 of class 1, 12 of class 2, 47 of class 3, 52 of class IV, and 632 of class V. Some cities have recently been re-classified to type one but still belong to provincial governments. This is currently a major institutional concern of the local government sector in Vietnam (based on personal experience). By 13/1/2015, in Vietnam there were 772 cities, including 2 special cities, 15 of class 1, 14 of class 2, 47 of class III, 64 of class IV and 630 of class V (Ministry of Construction, 2015).

[22] The regulations are identified in Articles 4 and 9, Vietnam Urban Planning Law 2009 and Decree No. 42/2009/ND-CP. Decree No 42/2009/NĐ-CP was promulgated by the Government on 7/5/2009 to replace the Decree No 72/2001/NĐ-CP of the National Government dated 5/10/2001 on the classification of Vietnam urban system.

national upgrading programme was recommended and designed by the studies of City Alliance[23]. A 10 year programme, called the Vietnam Urban Upgrading Programme (VUUP), was launched in 2004, aiming to improve the urban poor' s living conditions with an inclusive in-situ upgrading approach (Coulthart et al., 2006). VUUP was implemented in five cities, including in Can Tho, Haiphong, Ho Chi Minh City and Nam Dinh, with an approximate total budget of USD 417 million, which was partly funded by the World Bank, the City Alliance and other donors (City Alliance, 2016). Based on the test case of VUUP, and also the Cities Alliance funded studies' outcomes[24], in June 2009, the Vietnamese Prime Minister approved a National Urban Upgrading Program (NUUP) for the period 2009-2020 (City Alliance, 2016). NUUP was claimed to be the country's first explicitly comprehensive policy framework for urban upgrading (SRV 2009), targeting the upgrading of basic infrastructure and services in low-income areas in 96 cities across Vietnam through the promotion of participatory planning methods. NUUP was launched in 2011 and was provided with US$600 million (65% from World Bank preferential loans and 35% from the Vietnamese Government) for six projects in the Mekong delta region including Can Tho, My Tho, Ca Mau, Tra Vinh, Cao Lanh and Rach Gia. Also under the NUUP framework, there were other projects in seven northern mountainous urban centres (for the term 2015-2021) that have been started with the total cost of US$301,856 million. Both VUUP and NUUP are under the coordination of the Ministry of Construction (Ministry of Construction, 2015).

A range of other upgrading projects has been implemented with government funding and Official Development Assistance (ODA) from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Belgium Technical Corporate (BTC) or Japanese Development Agency (JICA). Examples are: Tan Hoa – Lo Gom Sanitation & Urban Upgrading Project (1998-2001) (Standly, 2006, p.3), and the ADB upgrading programme targeting small and medium sized cities (Tuoi Tre, 2013; Ha Tinh Newspaper , 2015). The programme is being implemented from 2014 to 2018, based on a preferential loan of US$95 million from ADB for cities including Ha Tinh, Buon Ma Thuot and Tam Ky. Upgrading has become a major task of big and medium sized cities. For example, relocating 26,000 households and clearing slums along canals have been identified as one main task of Ho Chi Minh's (HCMC) gentrification programme[25].

[23] The Cities Alliance is a global partnership for urban poverty reduction and the promotion of the role of cities in sustainable development. City Alliance official website, http://www.citiesalliance.org
[24] Cities Alliance website http://www.citiesalliance.org, accessed February 10th, 2016
[25] Vietnamnet online http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/environment accessed December, 2016

4.3.3 The Association of Cities of Vietnam (ACVN)

The Association of Cities of Vietnam (ACVN) is a non-profit, voluntary social association of 110 Vietnamese cities/towns from rank IV upwards (ACVN webpage, 2016). The foundation of the ACVN was laid in 1992 when Viet Tri, Nam Dinh, Vinh, Hue and Da Nang cities decided to work together to form an interest group of Vietnamese provincial cities/towns (ACVN webpage, 2014). In 2000, the association was officially recognized by Central Government and included both national and provincial cities/towns in its membership (Prime Minister's Decision, 2000). ACVN members are represented by the Chair or Vice Chair of the People's Committee (Executive Body) (ACVN webpage, 2016). As per the ACVN Statute (2006), ACVN is recognized as both a non-governmental organization (NGO) and as a social professional organization, being the only representative organization of local governments in Vietnam. ACVN defines its role as being a hub for building members' capacity and exchanging their experiences in urban development and management (ibid).

By 2014, the ACVN structure included an Executive Committee, Monitoring Committee, Secretariat and administration office (Fig. 4.2). The Executive Committee included a President, four Vice Presidents and 14 executive members. The Monitoring Board was responsible for supervising ACVN's performance and financial management. The Secretariat included three members - a Secretary General and two Vice Secretary Generals. They were in charge of consulting and assisting the ACVN Executive Committee to operate the association's activities. The ACVN Operational Office included the Chief Officer, Vice Chief Officers and staff. At that time, ACVN had three permanent staff responsible for daily administration and three temporary staff contracted to manage international projects. ACVN's internal revenue was based on an annual membership fee, calculated according to members' urban rank[26]. This internal source, however, was only a small part of the organization's revenue and was mainly used to cover administration expenses. ACVN's member services mainly operated on international funding. For example, during 2008-2011, only 11.79% of total revenue of ACVN was from membership fees and 88.21% of the revenue was from international projects (ACVN, 2011)

[26]ACVN identifies five levels of membership fee: special cities: 60 million VND/ year, city class I: 34 million VND/ year, city class II: 24 million VND/ year, city class III: 15 million VND/ year, city class IV: 12 million VND/ year (1 USD = 21,000 VND) (ACVN statute, 2014)

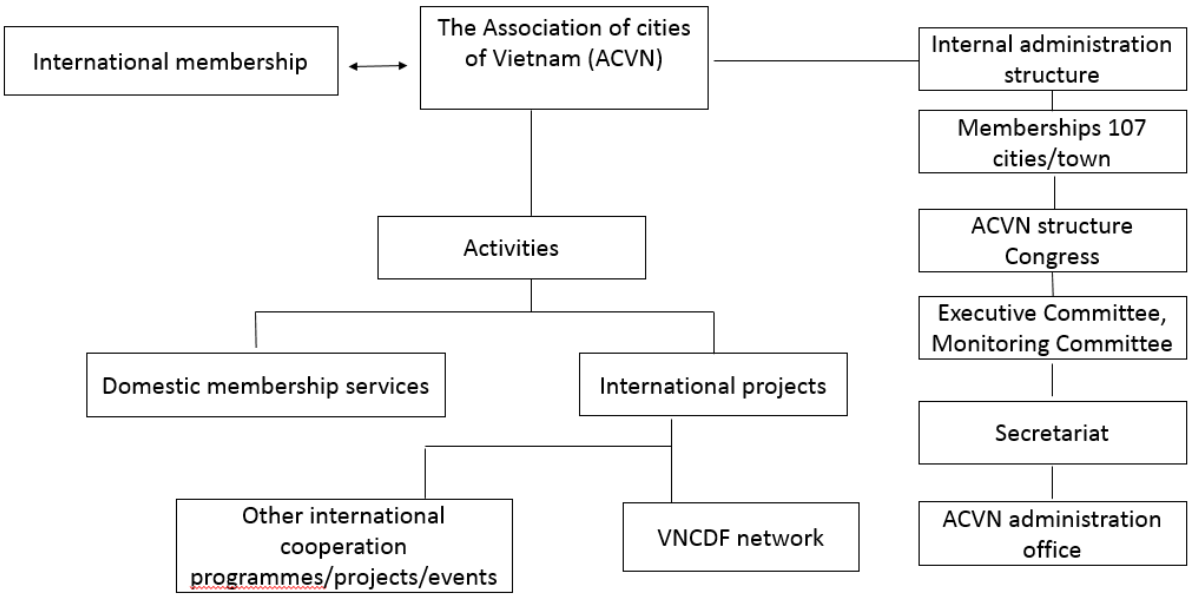

Figure 4.2: ACVN structure (Original)

4.4 The Asian Coalition of Community Action Programme

Because the case studies are part of the Asian Coalition of Community Action (ACCA) Programme implemented by the Asian Coalition of Housing Rights (ACHR), a detailed description of ACHR and ACCA programme is essential to set a context for the results.

4.4.1 Asian Coalition of Housing Rights

The Asian Coalition of Housing Rights (ACHR) is headquartered in Bangkok, Thailand, and operates in 19 Asian countries (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2015). The network originated from pre-existing networks of urban poor communities and key agencies in Asia, dating back to the 1970s (Boonyabancha & Mitlin, 2012, p. 406). It was officially established in 1988 as a result of the United Nations' International Year[27] (1987) of Shelter for the Homeless (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2015) (ibid). At the time of its formation, ACHR was the first NGO platform in Asia to address issues related to land evictions and the poor's vulnerability in urban areas (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2015). ACHR is the Asian branch of the Habitat International Coalition[28] and an Executive

[27] In this year, several regional processes and groups were organized to share experiences in addressing urban poverty and housing issues, and to discuss regional collaboration
[28] Global network for the right to habitat and social justice http://www.hic-gs.org/index.php.

member of City Net[29]. It also closely collaborates with Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI) (see Chapter 2), the World Bank and a wide range of the United Nations' organizations (World Bank, 2014, p. 5). The network's primary strategy is to provide inclusive development opportunities for people living in urban informal settlements across Asia (Boonyabancha & Mitlin, 2012, p. 40), and to challenge the conventional upgrading approaches that have led to massive relocation of poor communities (Leonhardt, 2012, pp. 482-483).

Since inception, ACHR's activities have developed through different stages (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2015). During 1988-1990, the network's activities initially focused on the poor's housing rights and land eviction in Asian cities[30] (World Bank, 2014, p.5). The second stage (1991-1993) witnessed the development of solutions to strengthen grassroots organizations' voice in development issues (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2015). The third stage was marked with a focused Training and Advisory Program, supported by DFID (UK) to facilitate cross country learning activities (exchange and study visits, regional workshops, etc.) (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2014). In the fourth stage in the 2000s, Community Development Funds (CDF networks) were i*n*troduced to promote community saving groups and credit activities in Lao PDR, Cambodia, Vietnam, Nepal, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Philippines and India. During this stage, policy advocacy activities were undertaken that required collaboration with local and national governments (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2015). The Asian Coalition of Community Action (ACCA) Programme was initiated in 2009 by the Asian Coalition of Housing Rights (ACHR) in its fifth stage of development.

4.4.2 ACCA programme management, components, finance, principles and procedures

At the regional level, the ACCA programme was managed by a joint ACCA committee, including 15 members, founded on the commencement of the programme[31.] These members are in charge to coordinate activities, review and approve proposed projects. At the national level, the ACCA programme is implemented by ACHR's country-based CDF networks, mainly involving community organizations, NGOs, development institutions and architects, in partnership with local governments and other stakeholders (World Bank, 2014; Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2014). At city level, City Community Development Fund networks (City CDF) are established as joint financial

[29] City Net is the largest association of urban stakeholders committed to sustainable development in the Asia Pacific region http://citynet-ap.org/about-us/.
[30] These activities resulted from the gathering of grassroots groups and housing right activists to protest the eviction of 800,000 people for the beatification of Seoul city in preparation for the Olympic Games (ACHR, 2015).
[31] Includes 9 representatives from countries currently active in the programme, 3 community representatives, 2 "senior" representatives, and 1 representative of the ACHR Secretariat (The World Bank, 2014, p. 9).

mechanisms; they were considered key partners of national networks to implement the projects locally (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2014, p.2).

The ACCA programme in each country consists of four components: tertiary infrastructure upgrading (small projects), housing upgrading (big projects), support for cities' and national networking activities (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2012). The total budget for all ACCA projects of each city is US$58,000 within which a limited amount of money is set aside for each project component. This regulation aims to de-emphasize the budget aspect of the programme, mobilize local resources and spread available opportunities to enable a larger "working together" network of communities and cities (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2012, p.3). Figures 4.3 and 4.4 illustrate the amount of money allocated for each ACCA programme component and the funding mobilized from other sources for implementing ACCA projects. Among ACCA programme components, housing upgrading (big projects) is targeted by this study. For each housing upgrading project, US$40,000 is granted to each participating city CDF and provided to communities as a collective loan. The loan has to be repaid to the city CDF for future projects in other communities (Archer, 2012b; Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2014).

The ACCA programme was originally funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BAMGF) through the UK-based International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) (World Bank, 2014, p.11). Reading the detail of its on-line, self-describing documents, the goals of the BAMGF are primarily to increase the use of digital financial transactions (Voorhies, 2016), which is justified as a means to help those living in extreme poverty, especially women, to move from a cash economy to a capital based economy, notably through reducing the costs to financial institutions of financial transactions (cash transactions are high cost for banks). The ACHR's CDF networks fit this model well. However, it is important to recognise that the ACCA funds go well-beyond simply providing funding mechanisms, but invest in social capital through setting modest budget ceilings in the form of collective loans for communities and promoting communities' collective voice to interact with other urban development agencies (Leonhardt, 2012, p. 482).

The ACCA programme principles are reported to draw on ACHR's experiences and lessons learnt from 25 years of action (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2014, p. 1). The programme's primary goal is to support informal settlements improve their living conditions (Boonyabancha & Mitlin, 2012, p. 404). Other important goals of the programme are to establish citywide networks of community organizations and promote their collaboration with local government (Boonyabancha & Mitlin, 2012, p. 403). The programme's key principles identify the primary role of urban poor communities in planning and implementing their projects. In this way, poor communities were

described as “key doers” to tackle city scaled problems of land, infrastructure and housing in partnership with their local government and other local stakeholders (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2014, p.1). Figure 4.5 illustrates, in brief, ACCA programme principles.

Additionally, the ACCA programme follows a flexible mechanism of approving projects that meet the diverse needs of poor communities (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2014). Project proposals are developed by local communities and submitted to the regional ACCA committee for approval. Specifically, communities need to formulate proposals defining the reasons for the project, how they would manage the project financially and what the impacts might be in terms of community and government relations (Galuszka, 2014, p. 4). By November 2014, the programme had been implemented in 215 cities, in 19 countries; 146 housing projects had been implemented in 127 cities in 15 countries (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2014, p. 7). Figure 4.6 illustrates the extent of ACCA programme projects in Asia and is indicative of its regional significance and consequently the potential importance of studying how its programme invests in social capital through urban housing renewal projects.

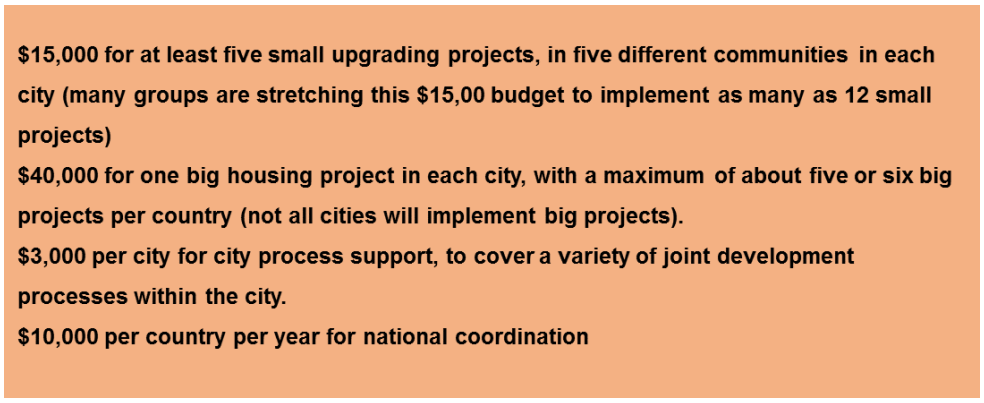

Figure 4.3: ACCA programme budget per city (Source: Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2009, p.7)

CONTRIBUTIONS TO SMALL & BIG ACCA PROJECTS : *(Fifth year figures, as of November 2014)*

	Number of projects actually implemented	*Number of households directly benefitting*	**BUDGET CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROJECTS** *(all figures US$)*				
			From ACCA	*From community*	*From government*	*From others*	*Total Budget*
SMALL Projects	2,139 projects (in 207 cities, in 18 countries)	342,399	2,773,582 (24% of the total budget)	1,882,678 (17% of the total budget)	6,023,115 (53% of the total budget)	695,795 (6% of the total budget)	11,375,170 (100% of total budet)
BIG Projects	146 projects (in 127 cities, in 15 countries)	49,356 *(got secure land tenure)*	4,971,756 (5% of the total budget)	12,541,949 (12% of the total budget)	84,182,677 (80% of the total budget)	3,061,554 (3% of the total budget)	104,757,936 (100% of total budget)
TOTAL	2,285 projects	391,755 households	$7,745,338 (7% of the total budget)	$14,424,627 (12% of the total budget)	$90,205,792 (78% of the total budget)	$3,757,349 (3% of the total budget)	$116,133,106 (100% of total budget)

Figure 4.4: Implemented ACCA projects by November 2014 (Source: Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2014, p. 7)

ACCA is a regional program of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights that is building a community upgrading process in Asian cities which is:

- implemented by people
- based in concrete action
- driven by real needs
- city wide in its scale
- strategic in its planning
- done in partnership
- aiming at structural change

Figure 4.5: ACCA programme key principles (Source: Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2012, p.1)

Figure 4.6: Asian Coalition of Community Action in Asia
(Source: Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2015 - A clearer map is included in appendix D)

4.4.3 Vietnam Community Development Fund Network

The Vietnam Community Development Fund Network (VNCDF), a member of ACHR, started its activities in Vietnam in the late 1990s. The establishment of VNCDF was in line with the introduction of the national economic reforms that led to open door policies and the cessation of US embargoes (in 1994). These events led to major growth of multi-lateral development aid programmes in Vietnam, especially in "Public Governance" and "Poverty Reduction". Before 2008, VNCDF was managed by an NGO, called the Environmental Development Actions (ENDA)[32]. VNCDF primarily aimed to strengthen community saving groups, set up city-level community development funds (CDFs) and link these saving groups in a growing number of Vietnamese cities (ACHR website, December 2014). VNCDF started in five cities[33] in 2000 and increased its membership to eight

[32] Since 1988, UNDP/UNESCAP funding programmes for participatory governance have been introduced in Vietnam. In 1992, UNESCAP was seeking to implement a pilot project in its second phase of community-based approach projects in Asia and the Ho Chi Minh government was the first one to take this initiative. However, in 1994, the city government changed the project's upgrading policy from in situ upgrading to site clearance (information based on interviews with key informants and see Tinker and Summerfield (1999, p.66) for more information on this project). The project idea was continued by ENDA. ENDA is an NGO under the global ENDA network and a member of ACHR. It works to actively develop environmental, social and economic strategies to enhance the living standard of poor disadvantaged Vietnamese (ENDA website, downloaded December 2013).

[33] The five original cities of the funding proposal application to UNHabitat were Hue, Quy Nhon, Can Tho, Viet Tri, and Ho Chi Minh. To sustain the ENDA CDF network, ACHR committed its support upon the ending of the UNDP funding phase.

cities[34] in 2004. In 2008, VNCDF was transferred to ACVN. Its membership increased from 8 to 28 cities[35] during the five years from 2008 to 2013 (ACVN website, 2016). VNCDF activities in Vietnam were completed in 2014.

Under the management of ACVN, VNCDF operated under a National Steering Committee and a National Coordination Team (Fig. 4.7). The National Steering Committee included representatives of central agencies[36], international donors[37] and pioneering community leaders. The committee was established to promote information sharing among stakeholders and to create better linkages between communities and policy making levels; members of the committee are invited to join the network's major activities. The National Coordination Unit functioned on a daily basis to manage ongoing projects. The National Coordination Unit includes a Director (ACVN Secretary General), a manager (an ACVN Vice-Secretary General), a part-time coordinator, a full-time project officer, a part time community expert and a part-time accountant (ACVN, 2008). VNCDF also involved a voluntary group, called the Young Professional (YP)[38], to provide technical assistance for project communities. The VNCDF office was based in the ACVN office. In each member city, a city CDF network was established, headed by a city government representative and a secretary, normally being a staff member of the Vietnamese Women's Union[39]. The national network and each city CDF network have a bank account (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2014, p. 44).

Since the outset, the ACCA programme has been implemented in Vietnam by VNCDF, following the regional guidelines in terms of finance, components, principles and procedures, as presented above. Funding from the regional network was transferred to the VNCDF bank account, managed by ACVN. Once project proposals from communities were approved, funding was transferred from the VNCDF account to the city CDF bank account and then allocated to local communities.

[34] Three other projects were merged into the network because of a changed coordination role (two projects in Hanoi and Da Nang cities were under the management of ENDA and one project in Vinh city was under the management of the new coordinator)
[35] The network of eight cities was enlarged after the involvement of the Association of Cities of Vietnam (ACVN).
[36] Ministry of Construction, National Office of Housing
[37] Un-Habitat partner
[38] YP team includes voluntary young graduates or university students from different backgrounds, interested in providing technical assistance for urban poor communities in their projects in VNCDF network.
[39] Vietnamese Women's Union (VWU) is a social organization, established from the country's national independence history, mandated to protect women's legitimate rights and gender equality. It operates under the management of the State structure and is organized at four administrative levels of central, provincial, district and commune (VWU website, September 2016).

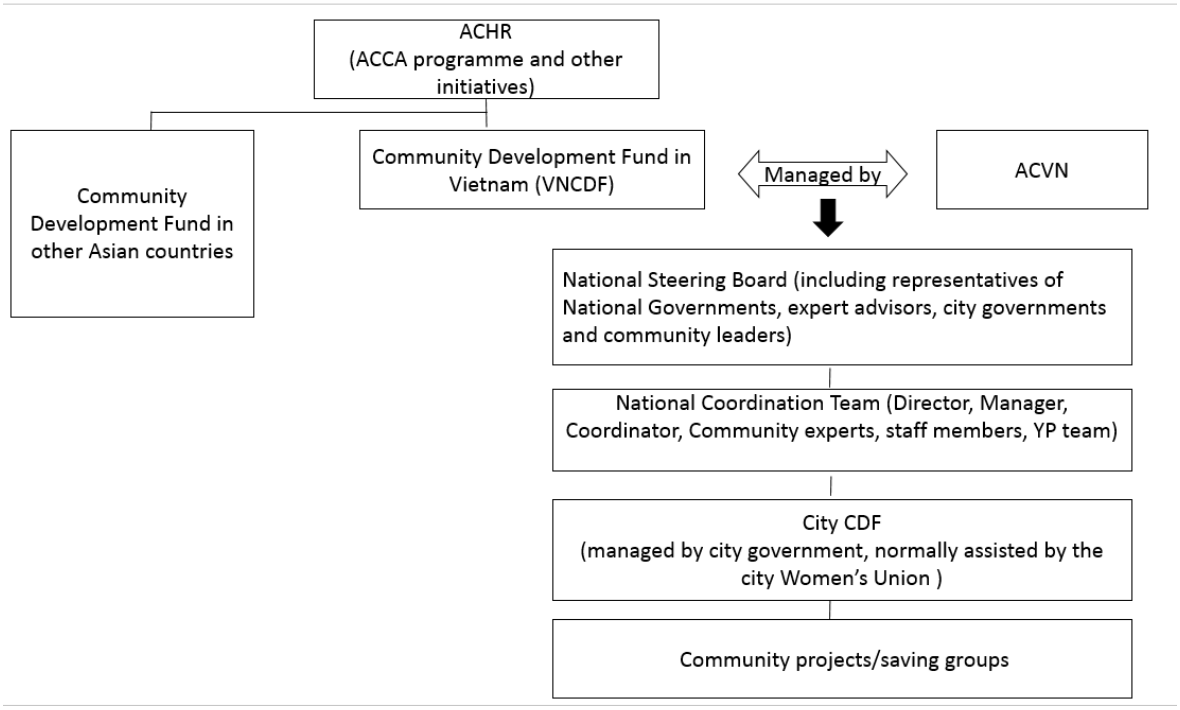

Figure 4.7: The structure of ACHR's regional network of community development fund and VNCDF (Original)

4.5 Research case studies

As introduced in Chapter 3, two case studies were selected for this study, the Friendship neighbourhood of Vinh city and Binh Dong 1 of Tan An city. This section introduces the general background of these cities, the cities' community development funds (city CDF) and the housing projects of each case study. Information provided in this section is based on a project document review and interviews with key informants. Table 4.1 summarizes comparative information of the two case studies.

4.5.1 The ACCA housing project in Friendship neighbourhood, Vinh city

Vinh city (Fig. 4.8) is of city rank I in the national urban system, under the jurisdiction of Nghe An province[40]. Vinh city has an area of 104.97 km², of which the urban area occupies 35.9 km² (32%), comprising 16 administrative wards and 9 communes[41]. Vinh is located on the national highway, N1, connecting the north and south of Vietnam. The city is also situated in the economic corridor connecting Myanmar – Thailand – Lao – Vietnam and the Eastern Sea (see footnote 41). During

[40] Decision 1210/QD-TTg on the approval of developing Vinh as the economic, cultural centre of Northern Centre of Vietnam.
[41] Information retrieved August 15, 2016 from http://www.vinhcity.gov.vn

French colonialism, Vinh was an important industrial township. In 1963, Vinh was officially established as one of the five largest industrial cities in the north[42]. The city was severely damaged in the American war (1954-1975), and intensively reconstructed afterwards. Under the collaboration between the East German and Vietnamese Governments in the late 1970s and 1980s, a large number of residential areas were developed for public sector workers; the average house size was 30 m^2. Vinh has continuously grown in terms of population, urban rank and size. The city's population has constantly increased from 154,010 in 1985 to 305,609 in 2010 and 480,000 in 2013; it is presumed to reach 667.000 by 2020 and 900,000 by 2030 (Ministry of Construction, 2015). The city was ranked type II in 1993 and type I in 2008[43]. In 2005, the Vinh development strategy was approved by Central Government to become the Economic and Cultural Hub of the Northern Central Area of Vietnam[44]. As a consequence of local development agenda, urban upgrading has become an important task, especially the upgrading of old public residential areas developed in the centralized economy during the 1970s and 1980s. In 2007, Nghe An Province launched the programme ''Eliminating Old Collective Houses in Vinh City and Replacing with Double Sized Houses". The programme attempted to upgrade 156[45] old public residential areas, which were categorized to be housing type IV[46]; was officially legalized in a Provincial Decision, dated September 2007. This document is referred to throughout the research as Decision 2007[47].

[42] Decision 148-CP on the Establishment of Vinh city under Nghe An province, dated 10/10/1963.
[43] Decision 404/TTg on the acknowledgement of Vinh city as city of rank II, dated 13/8/1993.
[44] Decision 239/2005/QD-TTg on the approval of developing Vinh city as the economic, cultural centre of Northern Centre of Vietnam.
[45] The figure reported in 2007 and collected from a fieldtrip was 142 (according to city document, project document and community's report), but it has been officially revised because of a miscalculation in Vinh's recent report on results of public residential area upgrading programme dated April 2015 (document provided by Vinh's Department of Environment and Natural Resources).
[46] Housing standard categories are identified in the Decree 209/2004/NĐ-CP, dated 16-12-2004 on construction quality management (Article 4, annex 1) and the Circular 7-LB/TT/1991 on housing standard.
[47] The main task of the programme is to thoroughly review all types of land use situation of those collective housing areas and develop respective housing shemes including situ land allocation, resettlement and land development.

Figure 4.8: Vinh city's location and image (Source: Internet , 2016) [48]

The Community Development Fund Network of Vinh city (Vinh CDF) originated from the UNDP funded project 'Localizing Agenda 21' from 1997 to 2003[49]. The project was managed by UN-Habitat and Vinh city government, in collaboration with some NGOs including ENDA[50]. In 2002, the city's project was merged into ENDA's network[51], and became one of eight VNCDF network members. Until 2008, when VNCDF was transferred to ACVN, Vinh CDF network's activities mainly featured savings groups and small income generation projects (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2015). After the transfer of VNCDF to ACVN, Vinh CDF was directly managed by the Vinh city government. Vinh's Women's Union assists in managing the Vinh CDF account and coordinates community saving groups in all participating wards and communes in Vinh. Vinh CDF's steering committee was headed by the city's Vice Mayor in charge of economic issues and assisted by a secretary being a staff member of the city's Women's Union.

Friendship neighbourhood (referred to in the following chapters as Friendship) is located in Block 6A of Cua Nam ward, Vinh city. The neighbourhood was established between 1974 and 1978 to accommodate workers of the state-owned Friendship Bakery. The ACCA housing project in Friendship (referred to in the following chapters as the Friendship project) started in late 2009 and was completed in 2011[52], upgrading 29 houses in an area of 1281.89 m^2 (Vinh government, 2012). All

[48] http://vietnammap.facts.co (15/8/2016) and http://diendanhoptacdautu.com, (20/9/2016).

[49] http://mirror.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/2874_52933_VinhCity.pdf

[50] The organization in charge of Vietnam Community Development Fund network.

[51] See the section on the overall history of VNCDF network.

[52] This time line applied only for the project's construction work; saving for the project's loan repayment was still going on beyond this time.

29 families in the area were Friendship Bakery workers, although, over time, some families had moved in and out. Because of national economic reforms and the massive collapse of state-owned enterprises in the mid-1980s, most workers in Friendship lost their jobs. Therefore, by early 2000, they were mostly unemployed, earning their living with informal jobs like selling street food or doing casual textile services at home. Before the upgrading project, houses in Friendship ranged from 12 to 70 m^2. This size range resulted from the uncontrolled division or expansion of house plots. Because of the collapse of the bakery in the mid-1980s, Friendship's housing area was not managed and maintained by any organization. Therefore, the houses were badly downgraded (Fig. 4.9). In fact, Friendship was listed in the target group of Provincial Decision 2007 because of the area's poor housing, high population density, poorly maintained sanitation and insufficient infrastructure. The Friendship project was the second ACCA housing project in Vietnam. The project was reported to be the first Vietnamese ACCA housing project that followed a collective and community-based upgrading process (Asian Coalition of Housing Rights, 2012).

Figure 4.9: Friendship neighbourhood before ACCA project (Source: VNCDF's document archive)

4.5.2 The ACCA housing project in Binh Dong 1 neighbourhood, Tan An city

Tan An (Fig. 4.10), with a population of 186.612 in 2015, is the capital of Long An province located in the Mekong Delta [53] (Wikipedia, 2016). The eradication of illegal squatters along canal systems has become an urgent task for most city governments in the region; most on-going programmes are focused in big cities like Ho Chi Minh and Can Tho (World Bank, 2011, 2014; UN-Habitat, 2014). Tan An is in an initial urban development stage growing from a former small rural township (Long An

[53] Wikipedia website, https://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki, assessed August, 2nd, 2017.

Province, 2016); the city was recognized as an urban township of rank III[54] in 2007. Like Vinh, Tan An has been promoting a high agenda of urbanization, aiming to reach urban rank II by 2020 and urban rank I by 2030[55]. To achieve this, Tan An is attempting to fulfil the criteria of the urban ranking system, including, among others, the reduction of poor housing areas (according to my interviews with city government officials). Upgrading poor housing, especially illegal settlements along canals in the city was identified as an important task in the city's five year development plan 2010-2015.

Figure 4.10: Tan An city's location and image (Source: Internet, 2016)[56]

The community development fund of Tan An (Tan An government CDF) was established in October 2011 as a financial mechanism to assist the projects (Tan An government, 2013). Like Vinh, Tan An CDF is headed by the city government Vice Mayor. Tan An CDF's secretary is also a staff member of the city Women's Union. In September 2011, VNCDF collaborated with the Tan An city government to organize a citywide mapping event to identify upgrading needs. The event was aimed at introducing the ACCA programme and facilitating participatory mapping of infrastructure and housing conditions of wards and communes in the city[57]. After the mapping event, four wards/communes of Tan An were selected to implement ACCA projects (wards 3, 5, 7 and Huong

[54] See section 4.3.1
[55] Provincial Resolution no 02-NQ/TU, dated 14/7/2011 by Provincial Party Committee on the development of Tan An in the period 2011 -2020.
[56] http://vietnammap.facts.co (15/8/2016) and http://diendanhoptacdautu.com, (20/9/2016).
[57] The event was implemented with representatives from Tan An city, ward/commune government representatives, and 380 community representatives from 76/76 blocks/hamlets in low income communities in 14/14 wards and communes (Project report 2013).

Tho Phu commune), among which Binh Dong 1 neighbourhood in ward 3 was selected to implement an ACCA housing project (Tan An government, 2013). After this, Tan An officially enrolled in VNCDF.

Binh Dong 1 neighbourhood (referred to in the following chapters as Binh Dong 1) belongs to Ward III (located in the eastern peripheral area along a canal system) of Tan An. The neighbourhood comprises 15 families illegally occupying a narrow piece of public land since the early 1990s. Some families in the area used to live in fishing boats along the Mekong Delta[58]. When fishing no longer provided an adequate income, they illegally built temporary tents along the canal (Fig. 4.11). Other families were immigrants from north or central Vietnam. This situation resulted from the uncontrolled migration in the early 1990s (see chapter 1)

The ACCA housing project of Binh Dong 1 (referred to in the following chapters as the Binh Dong 1 project) started in 2011 and was completed in December 2013, upgrading 15 houses in an area of 1.067 m^2 (Tan An, 2013). The Binh Dong 1 project was the fifth ACCA project in Vietnam.

Figure 4.11: Binh Dong 1 before the ACCA project (Source: VNCDF Project document archive)

[58] This livelihood is popular in the Mekong Delta.

Neighbourhood/Categories	Friendship project	Binh Dong 1 projects
Location	Cua Nam ward, Vinh city	Ward III, Tan An city
Implemented by	Vinh CDF network	Tan An CDF network
City CDF administration	Vinh City Government in collaboration with the city Women's Union	Tan An City Government in collaboration with the city Women's Union
Time of city CDF network establishment	2002	2011
Neighbourhood structure	Workers of state-owned bakery, established in the 1970s	Illegal migrants, established since the 1990s
Number of houses upgraded	29 houses	15 houses
Neighbourhood area	1281.89 m^2	1.067 m^2
Project time	2009 - 2011	2011 - 2013
Neighbourhood condition before the project	Downgraded public housing areas	Illegal settlement in poor condition along the canal side.

Table 4.1: Comparative background information of two case studies (Original)

4.6 Conclusion

The above introduces the general context of the case studies. The introduction first provides information about the national socio-political conditions under which the case studies were implemented. An overview of the Vietnamese urban system is provided. It introduces the housing upgrading need addressed in the research and particularly the Association of Cities of Vietnam – the key actor involved in the implementation of the case studies. The ACCA housing upgrading programme and its housing upgrading projects are then described at the regional and national level to inform readers about the administration structure of the case studies. Finally, information about the case studies is presented, encapsulating a general background about the city, the CDF network and the conditions of the two neighbourhoods that implement the studied housing projects.

Chapter 5

Bonding relations

5.1 Introduction

This research aimed to how social relations were mobilized in Vietnam to enable the achievement of two housing projects of the Asian Coalition of Community Action programme (ACCA housing projects) that were considered "unprecedented". Drawing on the three social capital dimensions, bonding, bridging and linking, the study used an exploratory approach to answer the question: "How did the three dimensions of social capital of bonding, bridging and linking perform in the two Vietnamese ACCA housing projects?" The results that help to answer this research inquiry are presented in chapters 5, 6, and 7.

This chapter examines the association, generation and maintenance of relations within the two case studies' neighbourhoods that enabled the achievement of the collective upgrading project. The results exhibit a transitioning process throughout the project stages. This transition process illustrates distinctive bonding nuances, the association, generation or maintenance of which are determined by distinctive factors. The chapter sections, therefore, are structured around the relations of major project stages (pre-project relations, project's pre-conflicts, project's post-conflicts, and post-project relations). Each section report results of the case studies in parallel, based on thematic categories of relation nuances.

5.2 Pre-project relations

The pre-project relations of both Friendship and Binh Dong 1 feature little evidence of a close-knit neighbourhood. Although the data showed that Friendship was a long-lasting community of the Friendship Bakery Factory's workers' families, their pre-project relations were shown to be loosely-connected because of the people's life pressures. Binh Dong 1 was reported by participants to be an illegal settlement and featured unfamiliarity amongst the residents because of their different origins and current stressful life.

Friendship

There was lack of close-knit ties in Friendship. For example, a participant reported how people interacted with each other, using a Vietnamese popular saying: "Before the project started, we did not talk with each other much …it was mostly that 'nha nao biet nha nay' [each family only cared about its own affairs]" (VC3). In a similar way, an individual expressed:

> …Before [the project began] we only saw each other when there are ['viec dai su' - translates as: major life-events[59]] in the area [e.g., someone died, a baby was born or someone got married]. We got together for a quick moment and then we went back to our routine (VC2).

This statement refers to a cultural context where the current life condition made it difficult for residents of Friendship to connect routinely and still spend some time to connect around key life events; this suggests an underlying connection among Friendship residents. This connection was loosened, as in some responses, by the people's busy life-style and earning pressures. For example, respondents said: "We left home early and came back late. We were busy and rushed to earn the living," (VC5); "… you know, life has so much pressure," (VC6).

Binh Dong 1

The lack of close-knit ties in Binh Dong 1 are demonstrated by unfamiliarity among the residents. For example, a participant said: "…Some lived in the cemetery area, some established temporary shacks on the riverside… People came and went, knowing that there were some families living around but they hardly saw or talked with each other" (TC5). This view was echoed by another statement illustrating the residents' social ignorance and lack of care for each other with a saying: "Manh ai nay song, chuyen ai day lam" [People do their own thing based on their own capacity without caring about others" (TC9)].

People's current stressful pace of life was also alluded to as determinants of Binh Dong 1's pre-project relations. For example, one participant said: "We were busy and stressful with our lives and did not care about each other, except some sibling families," (TC7). Another reason for the lack of close-knit relations in Binh Dong 1 before the project reportedly related to the neighbourhood's establishment history – people coming from different origins. This view was based on interviews with residents (TC5, 6, 8, 9, and 11) who came from different villages through the country. For example, a participant claimed: "…We did not have any place to go, so we got to stay in the empty space and it was a wild area. There were some families here already, -- We did not know each other." (TC6). The view was commented on by a project staff member: "They were not a coherent community, just randomly jumping in the area and got to stay there illegally…" (TP2).

In summary, the pre-project relations of both case studies accented the lack of close-knit ties, which showed the distinctive nuances caused by the neighbourhoods' establishment history. Friendship brings attention to the residents' underlying and residual connections that have been loosened by

[59] In Vietnamese traditional custom, weddings, funerals and a new baby being born are considered big events of one's life. Neighbours are normally informed of and invited to join the ceremonies, especially for traditional neighbourhoods in rural areas or public residential areas like Friendship.

the pace of everyday life, but still connect them around life - meaningful events. Binh Dong 1, on the other hand, underscores the lack of familiarity and established pre-project relations because of the residents' different origins and illegal land occupation. These different nuances of relationship, nevertheless, were both influenced by current life pressures and purportedly hindered the people's interaction and mutual support. This result implies that the neighbourhoods' long-term acquaintances may influence some underlying connections, but not be the determinant of people's cooperative ties.

5.3 Project's pre-conflict relations

Relationships in both neighbourhoods during the project implementation demonstrated two stages: pre-conflict relations and post-conflict relations. This section presents the results and implications of the cases' pre-conflict relations, which exhibited different nuances and influencing factors. Accordingly, the project pre-conflict relations of both Friendship and Binh Dong 1 featured interesting conflicts. Binh Dong 1, in addition, accentuated the lack of interpersonal trust and other psychological behaviours such as the lack of self-confidence, governmental subsidy expectation and over-spending habits.

5.3.1 Interest conflicts

Interest conflicts happened in both neighbourhoods and related to land issues, which implied an economic motivation behind land values and, consequently, an ineffective urban planning system.

Friendship

Friendship's interest conflicts happened when the neighbourhood was developing the upgrade plan and remarkably slowed the project's progress. Data showed that conflict happened between a family and other members of the neighbourhood relating to a decision on land distribution. The following quotes described the situation:

> The project already started and all families agreed to join but conflicts happened after that, when [the residents of Friendship] discussed about the [neighbourhood planning] design, (NP5);

> …The solution of re-blocking[60] the houses was agreed by most of the families, except some who did not agree and strongly disputed…very tense [at the meeting discussing about the neighbourhood planning], (VC4);

[60] The houses were to be demolished and rearranged to make efficient use of land area. See chapter 7 for more information.

> …we did actually come across some arguments, even conflicts between some residents. You know, when it is related to interests, not easy at all… (VC1).

The following statement details the conflict, alluding to the notion of uncontrolled house expansion, therefore implying the ineffectiveness of the broader regulatory system:

> The plan was to equally divide the whole piece of land among all families…Most families agreed with this option. But some families did not like that because their houses were occupying bigger areas, like 76m^2, because they had…[slang] illegally expanded the house to surrounding areas. They were not happy to equally re-block with other smaller ones that were only 23m^2 (VC9).

Interest conflicts in Friendship were eventually resolved by other factors such as the role of the Friendship community project leader, the common desire to change the housing condition, and the common sense of the neighbourhood's attachments (to be presented later). The resolution of interest conflicts, therefore, enabled the upgrading project to proceed in a cooperative manner. As two participants put it: "Finally …the decision to equally re-block the housing area was agreed by everyone, making way for the project to proceed…," (VC1); "We were so happy to see the signature of [the difficult resident] on the planning document. It took quite a while," (VC2).

Binh Dong 1

Like Friendship, the interest conflicts of Binh Dong 1 residents happened in the project planning stage, circling around issues of land and house allocation. The following are examples:

> Everyone thought for themselves and wanted to be prioritized to get a good land spot. They did not want to balance their interests (TC2);
>
> No one listened to one another. The planning session failed because they did not agree on any solution, (TC6)
>
> A planning session was supposed to last 3 days but it finished one day earlier because everyone left the room and did not come back (NP5);
>
> A resident [living in the central area of the land] was not happy because he thought it was unfair for someone from the riverside to come into the central land," (TC9)
>
> There was no way for the community's agreement on anything despite so much effort in explaining things to them (TP2)

Like the Friendship, Binh Dong 1's conflicts were eventually resolved. However, Binh Dong 1's conflict resolution introduced a process of internal discussion facilitated by the national coordination

team and city project management team, which relates to the vertical dimension of relations (linking capital) presented in chapter 7.

5.3.2 Neighbourhood psychological behaviours

Apart from interest conflicts, and unlike Friendship, Binh Dong 1's pre-conflict relations accented the neighbourhood's psychological behaviours including the lack of interpersonal trust, the lack of self-confidence, governmental subsidy expectation and over-spending habits. These psychological behaviours resulted from the neighbourhoods' socio-economic problems. The lack of interpersonal trust is expressed in the following examples:

> There were many obstacles at the beginning of the project. People did not trust each other, especially when discussing about money, (TC9); …No one listened to each other (TP2); The residents did not anyone in the community to keep the money and wanted the [project staff] to keep the money for them, (TP1).

The low level of interpersonal trust of the Binh Dong 1 Neighbourhood was illustrated even when a cashier was finally selected to collect saving money. As one participant stated: "We finally chose Ms [the selected cashier] to be the cashier, but only to collect the money and then deposited it right into the bank" (TC7). Views regarding the residents' lack of self-confidence are demonstrated in the following statements:

> We earned little money on a daily basis, for each meal, so at that time, we thought it was impossible and ridiculous… you know … how could we save and build the house while we were still struggling to earn money for each meal (TC7); They were so poor and did not believe that the project could be implemented, (NP5); We could never dare to dream about such a luxury thing like a playground for our kids, (TC8);

The theme of the people's governmental subsidy expectation arose, for example, in the following statements:

> Because they had heard about programmes that were totally sponsored by the Government, they did not make an effort (TP5); Discussion on the saving activities took long time to proceed as they did not try hard to put money in, (TP2); It was very complicated as some people did not cooperate. They did not want join the saving group. (TC10)

An over-spending habit was stated as another psychological problem that led to uncooperative ties in the planning stage of the Binh Dong 1 project. This view came in the following statement: "When discussing about the saving plan, no one believed that the saving activity would work because they were always in debt," (NP5); "Many times, the people thought that their saving could not be

sustained due to overspending habit," (TP2); "…Quite hard you know…, the habits of spending up whatever they had on the day…" (TP1).

Socio-economic problems of the neighbourhood were perceived to result in the neighbourhood's psychological behaviours. This view was expressed by participants when they discussed the circumstances that that led to the project's early challenges. For example, a participant reported:

> All the 15 families were very poor, mostly having problems regarding either economic status, or/and health issues. They earned the living by doing weather-based jobs like street vendors, taxi motorbike driver, fishing, casual scavengers, housework… Some families have sick members, or some others are separated. They just lived on a daily basis, with hardly any saving (NP5)

This view was reiterated by other participants that:

> [Binh Dong 1] consisted of illegal squatters or immigrants, who were homeless, in debt and had no means of living… (TP2); In fact, the community was a gambling and criminal area (TC4). The community was an illegal settlement, most of the occupiers were earning the living by informal activities and committed social evils… so it was no surprising that they did not trust each other, (NP5).

In addition, Binh Dong 1's situation featured other social issues. Based on other interviews with residents and project staff, among the 15 families, four were single elderly people unable to work and two families had a member with a severe health problem.

In summary, the above depicts the distinctive nuances of the pre-conflict relations that supposedly impeded the cooperation of both neighbourhoods' residents in the project's early stages. The two cases also had interest conflicts that related to land distribution issues that seemingly resulted from issues of a broader regulatory system. Binh Dong 1 reported other neighbourhood psychological behaviours as a consequence of the neighbourhood's socio-economic problems (social evils, debt, and unemployment). The following section describes the cases' post-conflict relations.

5.4 Project's post-conflict relations

Post-conflict relations in both cases show a change. If, in project early stages, the bonds among Friendship residents were loose and conflicting because of the current busy life-style and land issues, Friendship' post-conflict relations featured a collective upgrading process enabled by the application of ACCA upgrading approach; a common desire for a change; the neighbourhood's social ties; and trust in a leadership role. Binh Dong 1's relations also transitioned from being unfamiliar, conflicting,

and psychologically problematic to being connected by impacts of the ACCA upgrading approach, a common desire for change and people's ties with the living place.

5.4.1 Collective internal resource mobilization

Post-conflict relations of the two neighbourhoods featured a collective internal resource mobilization process that was introduced by VNCDF. As presented in chapter 4, the case studies followed the VNCDF network's ACCA upgrading programme that advocated key roles for poor communities by promoting community savings to mobilize internal resources and enhance communities' internal ties; a learning network of poor communities and city government; and a participatory upgrading based on the facilitative role of external experts, community participation and collaboration with city government. Among these approaches, the operation of the learning network of poor communities and city government and the promotion of the participatory upgrading approach related to relations that reached beyond the internal structure of the neighbourhoods, therefore, they will be reported in in chapters 6 and 7. The following section presents the internal resource mobilization in the two neighbourhoods. Data showed that while this process in Friendship mainly signified the funding aspect of the project (community savings, the use of the project loan and the mobilization of supports from personal contacts), resource mobilization in Binh Dong 1 involved, besides funding, and an internal conflict resolution that was facilitated by the project team.

Collective saving, project loan and personal support in the Friendship neighbourhood

The impact of VNCDF's intervention on community's internal ties was acknowledged, for example, by a Friendship resident who said:

> … We were still waiting for the city government to offer solutions based on the [Provincial Decision 2007][61], we were not strong enough to do anything together… thanks to the [VNCDF network and ACCA upgrading project] that we could implement the project together, (VC1).

Particularly the establishment of community savings was expressed as being necessary for people to show their commitment and communicate with each other. This view was illustrated in following responses:

> Right from the beginning in June 2009, we started to collect money for the project preparation. People were saving from 200,000VND to 600,000 VND

[61] See chapter 4, section 4.7

> /month [equivalently from 10USD to 30 USD] depending on their capacity…," (VC1).
>
> [The savings group] was good to make us feel that we had something to do together… We met each other more and keep updated about the upgrading processes… (VC3).

The following statement of the Vinh CDF leader supported the view about the impacts of VNCDF network and the savings mechanism on the residents' ties:

> [The nongovernmental network] is very important. The savings groups in the communities are very effective, which are managed by the communities themselves. They trust in each other. They are poor but they have higher trust in each other

Apart from savings, the housing project was based on a loan system that was based on the community's collective need rather than individuals or households. The loan for Friendship was to be used only in the final stage of the project because the residents could mobilize money from their savings or from their acquaintances (families and friends). For example, one respondent said:: "…we tried to mobilize from our own contacts, families and friends…" Another commented: "You can never have enough for building a house, it always costs more than plan, and it is good that you have places to borrow. [This resident borrowed a little from each relative, sibling, friend]" (VC6).

Internal conflict resolution, community saving and project loan in Binh Dong 1

As introduced above, Binh Dong 1's post-conflict relations involved internal conflict resolution that highlighted the role of the ACCA upgrading approach in letting the community independently discuss and solve its internal problems through the facilitative role of the VNCDF project team. For example, a participant reported: "We thank [VNCDF network and ACCA housing project] very much because they helped us to unite with each other and achieve such a project" (TC7). The following statements indicated the project's approach in opening a space for the neighbourhood to talk with each other:

> We actually started to seriously talk about the project when Ms [the project staff member] left and let us deal with it among ourselves (TC1); we were left to discuss and even argue among ourselves to find the most agreeable solution (TC10).

The facilitative role of VNCDF team was reported by a project staff member: "I received a call from Mr [one of the residents]. He said that the community wanted me to come because everyone wanted to go ahead with the project" (TP2). Support of the project team for the neighbourhood's internal discussion was in addition reported:

> The community was so poor and had a lot of issues. Thanks to the enthusiastic [a staff member], we were able to discuss about the project in many meetings [nearly 30, he counted] (TC3).

Finally, the outcome of Binh Dong 1's internal conflict resolution was reported:

> After 5 months of discussions, signs of willingness to collectively proceed with the project was sent to the city project. A staff member and a planning session was organized afterwards, under the guidance of the city CDF and active participation of the residents (NP5);

After the conflict had been resolved and the neighbourhood planning completed, saving activities started in Binh Dong 1, which, according to participants, significantly influenced the residents' collective efforts and helped them to practise saving. For example, one participant said: "The community now knows to save money…It is really a change when they practise saving for the project. Though they had to put aside the money for the housing loan savings, they had a happier New Year's festival" (TP2). The saving process was complimented by the community cashier who said: "It was so moving to see people come and hand in the little money they had every month". Commenting on this, the city project secretary said: "The savings helped to show the people's collective commitment and encouraged them to learn to save, to trust each other" (TP2). Unlike Friendship, funding for the Binh Dong 1 project mainly relied on the project loan and the community savings.

In summary, the external intervention of the VNCDF network collectively mobilized the neighbourhood's internal resources by the establishment of a community savings group and the provision of a minimum upgrading loan. The level of the VNCDF network's intervention differed between the two neighbourhoods, implying connections between the external intervention of a voluntary association with the availability of neighbourhood's internal existing bonding ties. This will be addressed in detail in chapter 8.

5.4.2 Common desire to change the housing condition

As previously stated, both neighbourhoods showed a common desire to change the housing conditions, which enabled them to come together and cooperate in the upgrading project.

Friendship

Friendship participants unanimously stated their common need and aspiration to change their homes. For example, respondents said:

> We promoted our highest solidarity to implement the project, (VC3); It was the right moment when we could start the project and changed our life. The project was so much up to the need of the people. We had been waiting for so long, (VC6); We were so excited to build houses together because the project met the real need of our people (VC9); We were so exhausted with the housing condition…We were desperately thrived for a change (VC5).

The common desire of Friendship residents to change was perceived through observation data that showed the residents' emotional excitement and satisfaction about the change in their housing condition. The view was echoed in the following statement: "Some community members were not very happy with the project planning ideas at the beginning but they changed and followed the common spirit and actions of others in the neighbourhood, (VC10)".

The statement above recalls the underlying cultural context of Friendship in which people shared some collective values. This collective value can be implied to be a common desire to change, which was indicated in forming the neighbourhood's "common spirit and actions" that influenced the behaviour of the opposition residents, thus contributing to solve internal conflicts.

Binh Dong 1

The desire to change also emerged as a common feeling of Binh Dong 1 residents. For example, respondents expressed: "[The previous living spaces] were very bad…No one would ever wanted to continue to live in such a condition…" (TC5). The following statement expressed the people's actions as a result of their wanting to change: "Later on, we realized that the project was not totally funded and understood that if we wanted to change, we need to save money to build our houses," (TC8). This statement, besides expressing the people's desire to change, refers to the result of an internal discussion process that was attempted and facilitated by the project management team; the residents were left to discuss among themselves, solve their internal conflicts and decide if they wanted to follow the upgrading project. As noted above, this process is presented in detail in chapter 7.

Like the Friendship case, the communal desire to change was reported to influence the behaviour of opposition residents. As one participant reported:

> There were some difficult community members. They did not want to save money, but then, they felt the pressure of the whole neighbourhood and had to follow. They themselves wanted a change… that's why they thought twice (TC10)

In clarifying, the same participant explained that although, at the beginning, most families were not cooperating, they later understood and showed their cooperation, except for some who were more difficult and uncooperative, but in the end followed the neighbourhood's common desire.

Commenting on this theme, a project staff member, who was directly working and helping the poor throughout the project said:

> In the [planning] process, they started to think about and hope for a future with a small space, that all could use. They had never dreamt of this possibility;
>
> They are all vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the society. Their poverty and difficult life may hamper them from having any dream or desire. But these difficulties also brought them together to share the hope for a brighter future in the housing project.

Overall, the desire to change was reported as a common feeling in both cases, which could possibly imply it resulted from their common struggling and dilapidated housing conditions. This common feeling suggests a communal psychological norm - a form of bonding tie - that functioned as an enabling mechanism to achieve a collective upgrading.

5.4.3 The sense of neighbourhood attachment

As previously introduced, the cases showed a sense of neighbourhood attachment but with distinctive nuances. Though Friendship emphasizes the neighbourhood's social bonds resulting from the residents' common feeling about historical events (national revolution and working life), Binh Dong 1 draws attention to the residents' ties with the living place.

Friendship

The neighbourhood attachment sense of Friendship was reported in relation to the residents' common feeling about the national revolution and working life (being co-workers in the Friendship bakery). The view was expressed by the phrase "tinh lang nghia xom" [translation: neighbourhood ties], repeatedly appearing in interviews plus observed events during field work. The meaning of the phrase was clarified in the following statements:

> We all had common values and spirits in the revolutionary time and the subsidized economy, [we worked in the same factory, sharing the workers' collective life and faced the same challenges], (VC3). We were sharing all our hearts and challenges during the project to [achieve what we have today] like what we did in the subsidized economy, (VC7); We used to be like a big family in the subsidized time. We were all workers of the

> [Friendship bakery plant] and have been living [in the Friendship neighbourhood) for a long time. We have lived here since 1970s, (VC9).

The connections among the residents were, in addition, expressed in the following statement, which suggested there were impacts of the neighbourhood's rooted ties in the failure of the provincial decision to redevelop the area[62]: "...It was not easy to define who to go and who to stay because all the households wanted to stay. This made the Provincial in-situ-upgrading plan unimplemented and opened the door for other solutions," (NP5). Based on the interviews, all 29 families in Friendship had either one or both house-heads working in the Friendship bakery. Most families have senior generations in the American war (1960-1975)[63].

Binh Dong 1

Binh Dong 1 reported a sense of neighbourhood attachment as the common experience of living in the wild land. The residents, in general, expressed a common feeling about their contribution to turning the wild land into a more liveable place, especially the connection with an age-old tomb, although they were aware of their illegal occupation of the land. The following illustrates this view:

> We came here on 30/4/2001. The land was full of tombs, scrub and bushes. It was very scary. Many people dared not coming around this place but we were fine (TC9); There is nothing to be scared here. We have been living here for more than 10 years. People say that this place was haunted but we did not see anything, (TC1).

Another participant commented:

> We came here since [the place] was very wild and empty. From time to time, more people came and established their life here. We all knew it was illegal so we did not claim any right…but actually, we have lived this land [turned the wild land into a place that is liveable], (TC9).

Particularly, Binh Dong 1 illustrates significant detail regarding the existence of an age-old tomb in the area. In people's opinion, the tomb was a sacred symbol and had a special connection with them. That view is illustrated in the following statements:

> [The old-aged tomb] has been here for a very long time. Many stories about [how sacred the tomb is]. People around this area dare not coming close it this land (TC6); But I was not scared. I normally visited and worshipped for the one who rested in there (TC1); We respected them and

[62] Before the ACCA housing project was introduced, Friendship was planned to be in-situ-upgraded in which half of the families had to be relocated to ensure the minimum house size standard (Vinh project document, 2011)

[63] Vinh city, in particular, and Nghe An Province, in general, are famous for their revolutionary spirit. The region led many national revolutionary movements during the war.

> wished them to bless us to live here, (TC3); Whatever we do [occupying land, setting up the houses], we never touched the tomb (TC8).

Taken together, these results illustrate the residents' common sense of attachment to their neighbourhood, which supposedly enabled the collective upgrading projects and demonstrated either historical social connections or ties with a physical place. Specifically, Friendship refers to Vietnam's communist socialism, initiated from the national defence wars, and a subsidized economy, which, in the absence of material abundance, features collective ties, equal status and mutual help[64]. It also reflects the type of bonds associated through one's working life'[65]. The Binh Dong case illustrates the connection between the occupants and the wild land, particularly a sacred age-old tomb. This connection features in the culture of Eastern countries and in Vietnam, in particular, which respects the existence and power of "the other world"[66]. The existence of these distinctive senses of two neighbourhoods can be possibly be attributed to the cases' establishment history and appear to demonstrate the relations that existed in the early stages of the project. These common senses, nevertheless, were not active until the post-conflict stage, implying a question on how this transition happened. This question will be addressed in chapter 8.

5.4.4 Trust in the community project leader

Another form of post-conflict relations of the case studies involved the trust for a project leading role, which introduced a significant difference between the two cases. While the Friendship project featured a remarkable trust relationship between the residents and the community project leader (herewith called Friendship project leader), the Binh Dong 1 project did not have such a role. Friendship's trust in the project leader was expressed in the residents' reliance on the leader's representative role, which was reported to be influenced by the leader's personal characteristics.

Friendship's reliance in the project representative

Data shows Friendship has a project representative, who is not the community's official community head[67]. The residents' reliance in the project leader (Mr Hung) is illustrated in the following examples: "There are other neighbourhoods that have everything: land, situ-upgrading permit… but their

[64] These traditional connections, despite having gradually changed because of national economic reforms and globalization, have significantly influenced Vietnamese social life.
[65] Vietnamese traditional generations tend to be strongly attached to their work organization throughout their life. Therefore, working relationships, in many cases, form a significant part of one's social bonds.
[66] For Vietnamese, this type of spiritual linkage appears to have significant meaning and influences in people's life (see Jellema, 2007).
[67] In Vietnam administration, each neighborhood has a regulated head, who is prestigious and voted by all the community members. The selection and criteria for community leaders are regulated in the legal document: Circulation No 04/2012/TT-BNV dated 31/8/2012 on the organization and activities of residential neighbourhoods.

projects are not successful because they don't have someone like Mr Hung." (VC3); "We appreciated the support of the project very much, but actually, the more important role is of the person like Mr Hung. Without him, the project would never have happened," (VC2). "He is a good and kind person…we were totally relieved when he was leading the upgrading project… He knew what to do," (VC7).

In the participants' opinion, the project leader performed his trusted and proactive role in different project stages from project proposal, planning to project implementation. Some examples include: "Mr Hung attended the conference[68] on our behalf… he was also the person who lobbied for the plan approval and also managed the construction work…" (VC9); "He represented us to attend [the conference]," (VC7); "You know… he proposed to implement the project in our neighbourhood – very critical moment…," (VC3); "He prepared documents to submit to the government, and wrote letters of all kinds… [petitions, requests, explanation] to functional departments on our behalf," (VC8).

The above results suggest a trustworthy representative role for the Friendship project leader and draws attention to a form of neighbourhood internal bonding that influenced the collective implementation of the project. The data, in addition, demonstrate a set of personal characteristics that indicate why the project leader was successful.

Friendship project leader's characteristics

Five major themes emerged from the analysis, including the leader's position, personality, skills, common interest, and local knowledge.

The leader's position

The data show that the Friendship project leader was a normal neighbourhood resident. The following statement expressed this respect: "Mr [the Friendship project leader] is not a legalized leader[69]. Mr [the legalized community leader] is a very kind and prestigious man but he was not directly involved in leading the project" (VC9). This view was explained by a VNCDF network staff member who reported:

> This is the lesson from [another project] which failed because the leader is brought from outside to manage the project… We could not control the

[68] The workshop was organized by the CDF network in collaboration with Vinh city government to select the neighbourhood for a demonstration upgrading project under the ACCA approach.

[69] In Vietnam administration, each neighborhood has a regulated head, who is prestigious and voted into office by all community members. He receives an allowance from the State budget. The selection and criteria for community leaders are regulated in a legal document: Circulation No 04/2012/TT-BNV dated 31/8/2012 on the organization and activities of residential neighbourhoods (replacing the Decision No 13/2002/QD-BNV dated 06/12/2002.

> community to do what we wanted. Must be someone within the community to understand and lead the process (NP3).

Personality

The leader's personality was stated to be another characteristic that influenced his performance. This view mainly surfaced from participants' discussions in relation to his honesty and reliability. Examples include: "Money is a very sensitive issue in many construction projects. But we know him. He did not take any coin for himself," (VC5); "We had no problem with his management of the house building expenses," (VC9); and "He is totally reliable, not taking away a brick…," (VC3); "We were thankful to those warm hearted and trustworthy people like him…," (VC8). Personal observation and an in-depth interview with the project leader provided the impression that he was a kind person with an educated background with a sense of art and literature. In the interviews, he did not talk much about his role but instead emphasized the project as a common achievement. He showed me how he noted good ideas and valuable learnings from the books he was reading. I also read his poems expressing the grateful feelings and an appreciation of the project.

The leader's skills

Another characteristic related to the leader's skills that mainly related to the way he effectively mobilized residents' cooperation in the project. In particular, the Friendship project leader was described by members of the project management as ensuring all project communications reflect the neighbourhood's common interests. Some examples included:

> In all communication with project staff, he had always consulted with the whole community before officially discussing with [the national VNCDF project management team] (NP1)*;* He never answered any question without opinions from the community (NP5); During the project process, Mr Hung organize regular meetings to explain necessary details and steps to the people. They knew everything that happened" (NP3).

The leader's mobilization skill emerged from the residents' discussion of the way he dealt with conflicts of interest in the planning stage and his project financial management role. Examples were:

> …for the difficult case [some opposing residents], he knew how to deal with them. He [referred to] legal regulations to explain to them (VC9).

> Hung talked to the [resident opposing to the neighbourhood planning solution] that the community would not claim the land of his house [of more than 70m^2] for the neighbourhood planning if he could legally inherit that land to his children… In fact, it was impossible because the land area was illegally expanded to surrounding area… With this argument, then [the opposing resident] had to rethink and followed the neighbourhood's planning, (VC7).

The leader's mobilization skills were also discussed in relation to his transparent management of financial issues, which was perceived to raise people's trust

> Mr Hung made sure that there was no misunderstanding amongst the community. So he was very clear in financial issues… very sensitive problem… He reported the cost and expenses transparently every week's meetings (VC3).

Another example of the leader's community mobilization skill related to asking a resident to connect with her cousin working in the governmental office. The resident reported that she did not think of that before and was encouraged by the project leader to do so. Discussing this, the project leader explained: "I knew that Mrs [the resident] had a cousin working in the Provincial Government office. So when the planning approval procedure got stuck, I [asked her to ask for his help in looking at the procedure]…" The leader's perception of the mobilization of different resources is expressed in his following comment:

> When we want to achieve any goals, we need to mobilize all resources… not just the regulations but also relationships… [We tried very hard, submitting all kinds of documents but not sure about the results] so we tried that as the last chance.

Apart from his mobilization skill, the Friendship project leader could effectively communicate with people from inside and outside the neighbourhood. For example, a project team staff member stated: "He always made very convincing speeches, acknowledging the role and contribution of everyone from government officials to his community members" (NP5). In addition, the leader's communication skills were expressed by the community project leader himself in the following statement:

> … I wrote a letter, sharing about the historical contribution of our community members to the national defence efforts. I also cited the National policy and constitutional article on equality and democracy implementation…I emphasized that regulations were made by people and could be changed by people to make it better for the people.

The leader's interest

Besides the leader's personality, mobilization skills, his leader's role was perceived to result from being part of the beneficiary community and having shared interests in the project. The following quotes illustrated this view: "Mr [the project leader of Friendship neighbourhood] is one of twenty-nine families in the area … that's why he is enthusiastic and motivated for the project…" (NP3); "It was important that he was part of the project's beneficiary community… so he was motivated to do the best, [not like the other project where the leader was brought from outside and the project failed]" (NP1).

Aside from this common interest, the data show that the project leader got special benefits because of his active role. Among others (presented in chapter 6), the project leader, together with the neighbourhood's official head, was given the right to choose his house spot before a communal drawing. Therefore, the project leader chose the land plot facing the street because it has higher economic value[70]. This detail was obtained from some interviews with project staff members and observational data. According to participants, the grant of a special interest for the project leader was commonly agreed by the residents as an acknowledgement of his leading role.

The project leader's local knowledge

The leader's local knowledge was another characteristic that influenced his performance. This view arose, for example, in a discussion between two national project team members (NP3, NP5), who identified that the project leader effectively led the project because he understood the community's internal situation. In addition, the view was expressed by the project leader in the following examples:

> I found the introduced approach in the workshop was useful for us. It was so much what we needed… so I raised my hand to speak….and I shared the view that..; I strongly proposed to implement the project in my community and pretty sure that the people would welcome it; I actively joined the workshop and after listening a full day, in the afternoon, I shared about what was suitable with Vietnam, what not. Some components could be done much cheaper in Vietnam… The workshop participants were impressed.

The leader's local knowledge, in addition, emerged from the way he managed the use of the project loan based on his understanding about people's financial capacity. The following quotes illustrate that:

> He had some tricks in creatively using the loan... He encouraged the community to save and use their own money first and only use the loan at the very end of the construction phase (VC8); Only until our money was used up, did we use the project loan…(VC2); We started saving up and used our own sources for the house construction. When we ran out of money and could not mobilize from anywhere then we [used the project loan]… you know, building a house always costs extra money than what we have planned (VC11).

[70] In Vietnam, houses that are closer to main streets have higher value due to the accessibility and favourable location for opening street stores.

The following response of the project leader provides more details about this view, showing his understanding of local people's psychology:

> You know, at this stage [nearly the end of the house construction phase, when people ran out of their own money], the people got the loan and highly appreciated it. They may have not had that appreciation if they had got the money at the beginning [the loan was very small, compared with the total cost of building a house]. It was like a drop of water when people were thirsty [it became very meaningful when people ran out of money].

Overall, the study reports the trusted role of the Friendship project leader. The result suggests that this was an important part of the Friendship project's post-conflict relations that significantly determined the cooperation of Friendship residents in their upgrading project. This relationship, based on the data, resulted from an available set of the leader's personal characteristics that were indicative of the leader's successful performance.

The lack of a Binh Dong 1 project leader

Unlike Friendship, the data show that Binh Dong 1 did not have a community project leader until the end of the project implementation.

The common idea among participants about the reasons for the lack of a trusted representative was the low level of interpersonal trust in the neighbourhood and the lack of a reliable, enthusiastic person. For example, participants reported:

> Binh Dong 1 neighbourhood project did not have someone to lead the process like Friendship neighbourhood. No one was listening to each other… very hard process (NP3); The challenge for Binh Dong 1 neighbourhood project at that time was that there was no enthusiastic community member to lead the project.

The following statement complemented the view, alluding to the difference between a senior community member and a project leader: "There is a senior men, whose son and daughter's families are also in the community, but the community treats him as a senior person in family, rather than a leader of actions" (TP2).

The lack of a trusted leader, based on participants' opinions, led to the participation of all residents in the project activities. For example, residents said:

> BD1 community project did not have a project leader due to the lack of trust among the community so throughout the process everyone was participating, (TP2); Not like the case of Vinh city, in Tan An, the people did not have high trust in each other so they mostly participated in every event (NP3); The whole community discussed and decided together who to do

> what, for example [a resident] was in charge of collecting the loan payment, and [another resident] was in charge of recording the construction diary because he had a neat hand writing (TC5).

In summary, the findings about Binh Dong 1 reveal the absence of a project leader, which resulted from the neighbourhood's low level of interpersonal trust and the lack of a person with enthusiasm and capabilities. The lack of a trusted leader, nevertheless, led to the more active participation of all residents. This result triggers an important difference between the two case studies regarding the existence of post-conflict relations and their impact on in the flow of internal ties in the upgrading. Discussions on the impact of the lack of a community project leader and other factors in Binh Dong 1's collective upgrading process will be presented in chapter 8.

5.5 Post-project relations

Post-project relations in both cases illustrated the different nuances of neighbourhood cohesion. They were expressed as the common achievement of a collective effort, the common sense of a "dream house", and the common use of the neighbourhood's common space. In addition, post-project relations in both cases featured the uncertainty of long-term ties.

5.5.1 Community achievement of a collective process

Friendship's post-project relations featured the participants' common acknowledgement about their achievement of a collective process. For example, a participant said: "Building our houses was difficult but building the relationship among our community people was even more challenging," (VC6). Another participant expressed the same view, referring to the strengthening of residents' cooperation and conflict resolution: "Along the project process, cooperative ties among the residents were strengthened and the conflicts were resolved…," (NP3). To participants, the achievement of their relations was the solidarity that they had during the project. This view was repeated in several interviews with residents VC1, VC3, VC8, VC9, VC11. One example is: "It was a once in a life-time event, when all the community members were so committed and worked together… a chance to showcase our community's the solidarity" (VC9).

Binh Dong 1 similarly reported the neighbourhood's cohesion as the common achievement of the collective project. For example, one participant put it: "Overcoming the challenging start, the community started to cooperate with each other and "Tinh lang nghia xom" – [neighbourhood ties] were tightened… ," (NP5). To Binh Dong 1's participants, through the collective upgrading process, they established a mutual understanding, help and care about neighbours' situations. This view

came in the following examples: “when building the houses together, we talked with each other more, thus understanding each other’s situation” (TC5); “We lent money to Mr [the resident with kidney disease] to pay for the cost” (TC7). About this point, the resident with kidney disease reported: “I could not pay the construction fee. I was supported by other families in the community. They paid more than my family”. Commenting on the enhanced mutual understanding and support among Binh Dong 1 residents, the VNCDF project team members said: “Once the common understanding about the project was achieved, the people helped each other,” (NP5). “Each time, they have some “getting together” events, they called me to come and join them. They told me everything about the community” (TP2).

To respondents, such cohesion among the residents did not exist before the collective upgrading; for example, one said: “Now the community has better living condition, more organized neighbourhood and especially they have established communal solidarity” (NP6). Another participant stated: “Before it was very difficult to balance the interests but “Chi Pheo[71]‘s attitudes have changed. People greet and talk when they see each other” (TC1). Likewise, another participant illustrated the change in people’s relationship: “…Now, when there is something that needs collective action, people just automatically help each other without the need to call [the project staff]…” (TC3).

The above reports the first form of post-project relations being the people’s achievement of a collective upgrading. Though Friendship reported their achieved cohesive relations as the enhancement of ties and solidarity, Binh Dong 1 drew attention to the establishment of ties and solidarity, which did not exist before the project. This difference between the two case studies can be explained by their unalike relations in early project stages. The result, besides providing a nuance of neighbourhood cohesive ties, suggests intriguing questions about how Binh Dong 1 achieved this outcome in the absence of underlying residual social bonds like those of Friendship; if these underlying social bonds are essential for a collective outcome, what factors that led to Binh Dong 1 achieving a collective process. These questions will be discussed in chapter 8.

5.5.2 The common idea of the dream house

Another form of the cases’ post-project relations featured the common idea of the “dream house”. Friendship reported this view in relation to the residents’ feelings about their attachment to the new house, the memories about the past conditions and the gratefulness to the supporting forces. The

[71] Chi Pheo: is a character in a famous short story of Nam Cao writer, an influencing author of Vietnam literature in 1940s. The character became wicked monster of the village after 7-8 year unlawful imprisonment, who is cruel and untoxicated (Wikipedia, 2016)

attachment to the new house, for example, was illustrated in: “we now have such a lovely place to live in…We miss it wherever we go. We just want to come back to our home each time we go anywhere…,” (VC5). People’s memories about the previous conditions were described in the following examples:

> …this is a dream. You can never imagine how we lived here before. We never dared to imagine about our current houses even in our dream (VC6); We could never forget the days when we were sleeping under the rain, on the nylon mattresses, having the pots to take water drops from house roof. Really scared to think back about the past (VC12).

Another statement came from a senior person who had been living in the area for more than 30 years: “We had to take clay from our rural home village, to prevent the water from getting into the house. Now no one has to worry about the weather, [smile]…” (VC2). People’s gratefulness was expressed in the following statement:

> The total size of my house was 12m^2 and we dried clothes by hanging them wherever we can in the house,… now we are living in such a nice place, … we thank the project and the community very much for achieving the project (VC7).

Binh Dong 1 also expressed a common idea about the “dream house”. Like Friendship, the view also related to feelings about the new house, memories about past conditions and gratefulness. People’s feelings about the new house are expressed in the following examples:

> Now we have more stable and structured houses (TC7); We cannot imagine how our life can have such a day when we have a roofed home” (TC12); “Binh Dong 1 neighbourhood completed their house construction in October 2013 and celebrated their unforgettable first New Year 2014 together”.

Recalling the celebration of the first New Year in the new houses, residents said:

> The weather was abnormal being so cold during our first Tet holiday in the new houses[72] but we felt very warm as we had better houses (TC11). Another respondent reported: “We had such a big New Year celebration. Despite that we had to pay the loan, we all put on weight as we had better sleep” (TC5)”.

People’s feelings about the new house were also expressed in statements showing their mutual understanding of and care for others. For example, some participants stated: “Mr [one resident with kidney problem] is having weekly hospital treatment but he has been improving a lot. He looks much

[72] The weather in the South of Vietnam is normally hot during the dry season from November to April. The Tet holiday is the traditional Lunar New Year (Spring Festival), normally in February (Western calendar)

better than before thanks to the new home," (TC9); "And Mr [a former army soldier] no longer has nightmare and now can sleep much better. Before he always screamed at night…" (TC8). Memories of the past came up from following statements:

> I have a family of seven, we lived in the edge of the river. Some other families as well….you can never imagine what endless kind of things that we have experienced (TC1); Before, we had to pay more for electricity supplied by intermediate provider,… the waste was dumped directly to areas surrounding our places (TC3); We lived in shacks, built with bamboo, locating by the canals. Flood waters got to the knees….the environment was polluted, the odour was terrible. We did not have any toilets… (TC6). Grateful feeling was expressed, for example, in the following statement; We are very happy. Thanks to the project, we now all have a house (TC9).

In summary, the above section describes the positive idea of the new house, which implies not only the improvement of the house's physical fabric and the security it provides but also the emotions it stirs up regarding the feeling of attachment, gratefulness and memories of the past. Given the cases' contexts[73], the idea of a dream house was remarkable because of its significance to one's life both materially (a big value asset) and spiritually (a home). This personal sense was shared among the residents, thus apparently becoming a coherent idea that suggests a binding mechanism for each neighbourhood's relations. This transition may explain the change in the use of pronouns from "I" and "my family" into "We" and "our community" in the interviews when participants described post-project relations. The finding suggests several implications for later discussion regarding the connection between human and non-human factors, the influence of a non-human factor (the house) in social ties and the transition of individual feeling into a communal sense.

5.5.3 The neighbourhood's common space

Another theme coming from the data was people's common view of the use of the neighbourhood's new layout that, according to them, facilitated the common space for people's interactions.

Friendship neighbourhood

Friendship' sense of the community space was demonstrated in the following statements:

> The neighbourhood is now different. They have been able to organize many communal activities there, such as wedding, funerals, children's days, mid-autumn festival, New Year's party, (VP2); We organize New Year

[73] In the Vietnamese tradition, the three most important assets in one's life is to marry a good spouse, to have a good buffalo (a means of production in the farming economy) and to build a house. The first two assets may have changed over time, but owning a house still seems to be dominant in people's thoughts (Werner, Whitmore, & Dutton, 2012).

> festival together, setting the fire, games for the kids, dancing dragon, …and visit each house with best wishes for New Year (VC3); We have used the common lane for weddings or funerals (VC8); Now, with the common big lane, the kids play with each other in the evening, and adults spend more time talking there, (VC2); Our houses are never closed during most of the day time (VC6).

Observational data provide a similar impression. The wide lane between two facing house blocks was common space in which the children could play after school. Every afternoon at dinner time, mothers took their children to the common lane and fed them dinner. They normally stayed longer to chat with each other while the children were playing.

Figure 5.1: Friendship neighbourhood after the project (Source: VNCDF document archive)

Binh Dong 1

Binh Dong 1 also reports comments about the common yard according to interviews with the residents and the observation data. Examples of interview responses include:

> [A resident] invited [other residents that were in conflicts] to meet and talk in the common ground… (TP2); We now have a common place to sit and talk with each other, (TC8); Now we spend more time to talk with each other after the day in the common yard (TC2).

Observational data show that the new house block arrangement is an L-shape with a centrally located common yard, which is on the way of people's going back and forth. The common yard's location, therefore, may facilitate the residents seeing and greeting each other. There is a picnic table with a cigarette tray and a tobacco cane[74] for people to sit at and a small playground for the

[74] These are an essential set of utilities for labour men and often commonly used among a group of men when they gather.

children. During both my trips to the neighbourhood, the residents were observed gathering in the yard, especially in the evening after people came back from work.

Figure 5.2: Binh Dong 1 after the project (Original)

Figure 5.3: A resident's wedding in Binh Dong 1's common yard (Project document)

The results in both case studies report the impact of the physical layout of the upgraded neighbourhoods on residents' interactions. As the section above, the Binh Dong 1's result suggests the influence of physical factors (non-human) in social bonding ties. Insights on how this implication addresses the research question will be provided in chapter 8.

5.5.4 The uncertainty of a long-term neighbourhood relationship

Post-project relations in both cases draw attention to the maintenance of bonding ties prompted by the reported uncertainty of the neighbourhoods' long-term relations. Friendship's uncertain long-term relations involved the goal-oriented temporary togetherness, the change in trust relations with the project leader and the potential change of the neighbourhood structure caused by potential individual land titles. Binh Dong 1's uncertain long-term relations concerned the neighbourhood's continuous social problems and the potential change of neighbourhood structure provided by the issuing of individual land titles.

Friendship

The uncertainty of Friendship's long-term relationships was demonstrated by concerns about the temporary goal-oriented togetherness, the change in trust relationship with the project leader and the impact of individual land use titles on the neighbourhood's structure. The following examples illustrate the first point:

> You know, when people have achieved their goal, they tend to come back to their private space [their normal and individualistic routine], (NP5); Not sure if all internal conflicts were solved among the community members,

> but the desire to improve the houses brought them together during the project phase, aiming to achieve the common goal (NP3).

In Friendship's post-project relations, uncertainty was echoed in discussions that revealed the change in trust relationship of some residents with the community project leader. Although these comments were not prominent in the interviews, they identified a number of issues circling around the role and privileges the leader got after the project had been completed. For example, some participants thought:

> He seems to be too proud of his contribution to [the Friendship upgrading project] and talked with other communities as if it was very challenging and no one else could do like that, (VP2); He is very smart. He knows how to emphasize his role… Sometimes he talks as if it is his own project (VC11); He is not the real leader of the community. [The official leader] was not invited while Hung has been always invited as the representative of the neighbourhood (VC12).

Discussion with the official project leader did not reflect the same impression. In fact, the official leader heartily acknowledged the role of the "voluntary" project leader in the neighbourhood upgrading project. According to the VNCDF network management team and some residents, the reasons for the above concerns were a result of the privileges and active role that the community project leader got after the project finished. For example, the national network coordinator reported that: "The neighbourhood residents and also some staff in the city project team did not feel happy because they thought the community project leader got many privileges from the project that belonged to everyone," (NP3). In the same vein, another project staff member commented that: "It is always like that… when things are done, people forget what happened and become jealous when they see Hung get many opportunities to travel and join conferences" (NP5). According to the same respondent, the Friendship project leader's active participation in national and international exchange activities of VNCDF (to be presented in chapter 6) raised the above concerns.

The land title issue emerged as another concern regarding Friendship's uncertain post-project relations. For example, one participant reported when asked about the areas that he wanted to change in the project: "Everything was fine apart from the land use title. We really wish that the City Government process the policy of allocating individual land title" (VC7). Explaining this concern, another participant said: "The Government still holds the communal land use title for our neighbourhood. It would be good if we can apply for [individual land use title]" (VC9). Discussing this issue, a project staff member, alluding to the potential change of neighbourhood structure if individual land title is delivered commented:

> Individual land use title gives the families more rights like to mortgage their property or borrow money from the bank. But it also means that they can freely sell their houses and consequently the neighbourhood structure will change, (NP3).

Binh Dong 1

Binh Dong 1's post-project relations uncertainty showed concerns about internal social issues and also the land use title issue. Interviews with some residents (TC3,4,5 8,9) and project management staff members reported that some residents were still involved in gambling and fighting each other. Discussion also concerned local socio-economic challenges in terms of families' large number of children, early marriage and unemployment. The land title issue was a major concern of the residents based on interviews with TC1, 3, 4, 6, and 8, focus group discussion and observational data. In the discussions, Binh Dong 1 residents were concerned about when they could have individual land use title. They were actively discussing the price of their house's land, which would remarkably rise if the people got the land use title. Commenting on this issue, a project staff member said:

> As a matter of fact, if the people have a land use certificate, they tend to freely sell their house. And for a community like Binh Dong 1 with existing problems of debt and lack of skills, [individual land title may enable the people to sell the house easily and may lead the people back to their starting point] (TP2).

The reported concerns about the uncertainty of both cases' long-term ties are important results, featuring the unsecured collective efforts, the change in trust relationship, internal socio-economic problems and the potential change of neighbourhood structure caused by the change in land use title. These results imply concerns about the maintenance of bonding ties that will be further discussed in chapter 8.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored the bonding ties associated and maintained within neighbourhoods through an upgrading project. A transition process with different nuances of bonding ties and factors that influence the formation of these ties has been described. This process investigated and distinguished the nuances of the bonding ties in each stage of the project relationships. The formation of each bonding relation features the influence of distinguishable factors and suggests different binding mechanisms. Table 5.1 summarizes these results. The results show some significant similarities and differences between the two cases that suggest important implications for the functioning of different binding mechanisms. These implications will be discussed in chapter 8. Chapter 6 discusses

the horizontal network (bridging relations) that purportedly enabled the implementation of the upgrading projects.

Project relations' stages	The formation of bonding relations in Friendship neighbourhood			The formation of bonding relations in Binh Dong 1 neighbourhood		
	Influencing factors	**Norms/Forms of relations**	**Bonding capital for the upgrading project**	**Influencing factors**	**Norms/Forms of relations**	**Bonding capital for the upgrading project**
Pre-project relations	Neighbourhood establishment history/employment acquaintances	Underlining social bonds but loosely-connected	Not available	Neighbourhood establishment history (illegal settlement)	unestablished neighbourhood relationship	Not available
	Life-style	Self- interest		Life-style	Ignorance, Self-interest	
Project's pre-conflict relations	Economic motivation behind the land value; Ineffective urban planning system	Land interest conflicts	Not available	Economic motivation behind the land value; Ineffective urban planning system	Land Interest conflicts	Not available
				Neighbourhood socio-economic problem	Lack of interpersonal trust; Lack of self-confidence; Expectation for governmental subsidy; Over-spending habits.	
Project's post-conflict relations	VNCDF network	ACCA upgrading approach	Internal resource mobilization	VNCDF network	ACCA upgrading approach	Internal resource mobilization
	Housing adversity	Personal desire to change	Common desire to change	Housing adversity	Desire to change	Common desire to change
	Local socio-economic background (Socio-cultural values)	Underlying neighbourhood's social bonds	Residents' social ties mobilized to achieve the common goal	Neighbourhood socio-economic background	Individual sense of place attachment	Residents' common sense of place attachment
	Leaders' characteristics Leadership position; Personality; Skills; Common project interests; Special interests	Trustworthy project leadership	Neighbourhood's trust/reliance in the representative	Neighbourhood socio-economic problem	Lack of a trustworthy project leadership Stronger role of the external project mediator (presented in chapter 7)	Full participation of all families in the project

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Project relations' stages</th><th colspan="3">The operation of bonding relations in Friendship neighbourhood</th><th colspan="3">The operation of bonding relations in Binh Dong 1 neighbourhood</th></tr>
<tr><th>Influencing factors</th><th>Norms/Forms of relations</th><th>Bonding capital for the upgrading project</th><th>Influencing factors</th><th>Norms/Forms of relations</th><th>Bonding capital for the upgrading project</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Post-project relations</td><td>Collective upgrading process</td><td>Strengthened cooperative ties and solidarity</td><td rowspan="3">Neighbourhood cohesion</td><td>Collective upgrading process</td><td>Established mutual understanding, help and care</td><td rowspan="3">Neighbourhood cohesion</td></tr>
<tr><td>House meaning/past housing adversity</td><td>Individuals' feeling about a dream home (asset-based value, security, emotions related to past memories, life change experience, gratefulness)</td><td>House meaning/past housing adversity</td><td>Individuals' feeling about a dream home (asset- based value, security, emotions related to past memories, life change experience, gratefulness)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Neighbourhood layout and common space</td><td>Common use of the neighbourhood common space</td><td>Neighbourhood layout and common space</td><td>Common use of the neighbourhood common space</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">The uncertainty of long term relations due to the change of factors that influenced the bonding ties (accomplished goal, finished project leadership role but continuous benefits); and the potential delivery of individual land use title</td><td colspan="3">The uncertainty of neighbourhood's internal long-term relations due to socio-economic problems and the potential delivery of individual land use title</td></tr>
</table>

Table 5.1: Result summary – The formation of bonding relations in two studied neighbourhoods (Original)

Chapter 6

Bridging a network of learning

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 examined the bonding relations associated, generated and maintained during the housing upgrading process within communities; chapter 6 examines bridging relations operating in the VNCDF network under which the housing project case studies were implemented. In particular, the chapter presents the mechanisms of investment in social relations that enabled the operation of VNCDF. They include network legitimacy, network cohesion and the network learning approach. As introduced in chapter 4, VNCDF was founded in 2002 and was operated by ENDA until 2008; the network was transferred to the management of ACVN in September 2008. In this chapter, VNCDF is used in short for the VNCDF network. The terms cities, city governments and urban governments are used interchangeably. The term "VNCDF management staff members" is used to refer to VNCDF network staff members at regional, national, city level and key community project leaders. Vinh CDF and Tan An CDF are used for the community development fund networks of Vinh and Tan An cities.

6.2 Network status strengthening

The transfer of VNCDF to ACVN's management arose as the first major influencing factor for the operation of VNCDF. This theme arose from the discussions on the impacts of ACVN's network of urban governments in VNCDF, the hybrid status of ACVN and concerns about ACVN's capability.

6.2.1 ACVN's urban government membership

ACVN's network of city governments was commonly expressed by participants to be a crucial condition for the operation and development of VNCDF, first, because of its impacts on the participation of and linkages among city governments. For example, participants discussed the increase of VNCDF members and their enhanced horizontal linkages:

> …The network membership included only eight cities during the period of 8 years from 2000 to late 2008, but increased to 28, in just two years from 2009 to 2011 after ACVN was involved… (NP1); and [The network city members] are strengthening their horizontal connections through ACVN membership, (NP6).

In the same way, the following statement demonstrated the opinion of ACVN's international partners about the organization's accessibility to city governments:

> ACVN was necessary for international development interventions to access Vietnamese cities' (IC1); Although ACVN has a lot of challenges, it was a good channel to access the city government, quite crucial for development interventions at this level (IC2).

ACVN's city government membership was important, also in the eyes of participants from central governments or central academia. Examples included:

> ACVN can provide better understanding of cities' needs and concerns, which helps the development of national urban training program or urban policies' (A leading urban expert); [ACVN]'s inputs are very helpful for [the national urban management training academy] to develop a better training program (A representative of the Academy of Urban Management Training); ACVN is a close partner in providing consultation for our agency. It is the organization of local governments and we need them to represent this sector in policy development… (A representative of the national Ministry of Construction)

Secondly, the impact of ACVN was shown to form the legitimate status of VNCDF, which attracted the cooperation of both city governments and local communities. The tendency of city governments to cooperate with an organisation seen as a legitimate partner was reported by key informants of VNCDF network based on their experience in running the network before it was transferred to ACVN. For example, one participant said:

> … Without ACVN, the project could not be done successfully. Like [an organization], which had a lot difficulties in doing their community projects. They were interrogated by the local government when coming to work with the communities…before, we were similar, just coming individually to the cities communities. The work was not running quickly, so difficult and time consuming. Now, with ACVN's network we have the system to approach through cities government and have their confirmed commitment… (NP5)

This view was echoed by the following statements showing the trust of city governments and local communities in ACVN based activities:

> We implemented the project because it helped to address our need, and was introduced by ACVN… I attended some events in the network and enrolled in the VNCDF network…" (Tan An city Vice Mayor);

> During the previous phase, we did not know who was Ms X. She came and ask us to set up saving group… now we know that this is project of [the national organization of cities] so we know it is legitimate and we feel safe… (A Friendship resident);

> If it was not the project of ACVN, then we wouldn't have had the commitment of city government, no support for legal mechanism, infrastructure, etc (A city project staff).

> The project sign of ACVN was the foundation for us to build our houses..., the [local community patrol] team could not stop us from pulling down the old houses and building the new ones, (TC3).

Commenting on the same issue, a VNCDF staff member indicated the need for an organization to have a legitimate status to run a project: "In many other projects, they need to rely on a prestigious organization because the communities are sceptical about unnamed organisation and they don't cooperate."

These above examples agree with statements found in some project documents. For example, a document reported: "With this national linkage between cities already in place, when the process works in one city, it spreads to others almost automatically" (Asian Coalition Housing Rights, 2014, p. 44). Another example, drawn from a project's assessment report, which implied some scepticism, admitted ACVN's influence in strengthening the membership and linkages of VNCDF members:

> …But for the time being, ACVN has had a very big and special task in supporting this work in a big way, and getting many cities involved. This link with ACVN opens up a new space for many cities to join in the process and to initiate ACCA projects in their cities… (ACCA Assessment trip 1.4.2010).

Thirdly, ACVN's urban government membership was expressed (RP3, NP6, NP1 and NP2) as a key factor prompting a change in the VNCDF network – the transfer of management from ENDA to ACVN (described in detail in chapter 4, page …). According to these interviewees, besides other reasons, the transfer was aimed to strengthen network management and expand the network membership to other Vietnamese cities. For example, one said:

> …Before we also set up a city CDF, but it was mainly the collaboration between communities' saving groups and women's unions…The objectives were hardly achieved, (NP6).

Another participant complemented the view by indicating a reason of the change: "The goal is to connect cities, which are considered as separated points and mainly operate in a vertical system" (NP3).

6.2.2 The hybrid status of ACVN

Apart from the impact of ACVN's urban government membership, the hybrid status of ACVN emerged as another factor that influenced VNCDF's legitimacy and operation. ACVN featured a hybrid status: one that is both a non-public entity and a representative of public institutions (urban governments). Discussions about this illustrated two discrete perspectives: the status ambiguity and the advantage for VNCDF's operation.

Views on ACVN's ambiguous status arose in interviews and project document analysis. Interviews with key informants of central and international agencies showed a common confusion about whether ACVN was a representative of urban governments (a governmental organization) or a representative of urban communities (a non-governmental organization (NGO)). For example, one participant said:

> ACVN is called an NGO but its members are city governments… [The other question] is if it represents city governments in relation with the central government or the communities in relation with the governments?] The former one is governmental and the later belongs to the civil society (IC3)

Another participant commented: "It is a voluntary and non-state organization, self-funded, but its members are city governments and membership is paid from the city state budget" (NP2). The same concern was raised by an international urban expert, alluding to the question about the real impact of ACVN in community development initiatives: "I'm not sure if ACVN is totally independent from local government to support the communities' (IC3). The same question about the unclear mandate of ACVN was introduced in a project document:

> We have to see how the communities on the ground will collaborate with the cities in this process, and be very active - this will be one of our important tasks in the next two years……[the note discussed the enlargement of network members under the management of ACVN]… (ACCA Assessment trip report, 1st April, 2010).

The analysis of ACVN's constitution suggested similar concerns. The document defines ACVN as a NGO of Vietnamese cities' governments' (ACVN statute, 2011, page 2), i.e., two concepts are indicated in the definition: "non-governmental organization" and "an organization of city governments" suggesting conflicting functions and implied potential constraints for the organization to realise both functions as a non-state actor and a representative of urban governments.

On the other hand, the advantage of ACVN's hybrid status was expressed in relation to the benefits of ACVN's both positions: being a representative of urban governments and being a voluntary

association (= non-state). For example, a VNCDF network international consultant acknowledged the non-state nature of ACVN:

> ACVN is important in terms of its "non-state" or "non-public" factor. It is good that the project is based on an NGO like ACVN, as it is not affected by the public bureaucracy. We had a problem at the beginning when we had [a city government] …involved to lead the network…. Luckily we don't have the project based on any [governmental agency] (RP3).

On the other hand, ACVN's "governmental nature" was complimented as a favourable condition. For example, one participant commented, alluding to the notion of ACVN not being "a pure NGO":

> ACVN is not operating as a real NGO, which is supposed to be totally independent from government. ACVN is rather an intermediary actor, I think for [ACCA housing projects], it is an advantage as obviously, it connects communities with city governments … (IC3)

Other participants jointly discussed the benefits of ACVN's hybrid status:

> ACVN is quite flexible not as an NGO but as an intermediary actor to play the advocacy role. Interestingly, ACVN has impacts on not only local government but also communities' (IC2); I don't think that another organization can replace ACVN to do those kind of local governance projects," (NP3).

Another participant, alluding to the combined impacts of ACVN to both urban governments and communities, commented:

> ACVN has its own network of local governments in advance and operates relatively independently from the bureaucracy so it can softly combine the communities and the government. Not like other NGOs that are only pro-community…, this is not always welcomed by the government (RP1).

The advantage of ACVN's hybrid status was explained as resulting from the institutional context that accented the national institutional barriers for NGOs' activities and local governments' role in addressing upgrading projects. The lack of an institutional framework for the operation of NGOs in Vietnam was expressed, for example, by an UN urban expert: "We need to institutionalize the strength of ACVN, through promoting a more legal framework for the operation of NGOs in Vietnam." The view was echoed by another participant, emphasizing the role of local government in actions at grassroots level: "Advocating for the community is a process and we need to adapt to the real context of Vietnam. We need to interact with the local government to have impacts on the communities," (NP1). Likewise, a key VNCDF participant said, referring to the nature of VNCDF projects:

> ACVN has the advantage of being the association of cities. In the context of Vietnam, self-initiated actions of local communities are not always supported, especially related to public affairs like land and houses… Everything needs to be through the local government (NP6).

VNCDF projects' land and housing issues were concurrently indicated by the VNCDF coordinator to be local government issues: "The projects critically emphasise that poor communities and local governments are involved from the beginning. Especially for land and urban issues, local governments are very important," (NP3). The following statement reiterated the influence of the institutional framework which required building the capacity of local government in combination with community development actions.

> We are aiming for democracy, but the democracy that we expect, not the chaos democracy. The process is building up the capacity for the poor. This is what we want. But we need to build the awareness for both the community and the local government. That's why we call it a process (NP5).

6.2.3 The capacity of ACVN organization

ACVN's organizational capabilities attracted remarkable concerns regarding the performance of VNCDF staff, the network leadership, and its long-term development. The findings were expressed by key informants directly involved in the implementation of VNCDF, including members of the project team and international and national contracted experts; observation data also provided a consistent view.

The concerns about VNCDF staff performance first related to building capacity for young staff and filling the gap between junior and senior staff. For example, one participant raised a question on the professionalism of the network's staff:

> [The organization's] staff's attitude is very gentle, very nice and participative. The way how they talk, listen. People like [one of the junior staff] is very good, very eager to learn… These are all good, but how to professionalize these forces, how to build from here? (RP1).

Likewise, the professionalism of staff was illustrated as follows*:* "…but [one of the junior staff] needs more experience, and improve the skills to communicate with government officials …" (NP1); "ACVN need to invest in its future generation by providing more training, not just certificates, I mean a real professional training program" (NP3). Another similar example alluded to the notion of the network's finance capacity: "Because we don't have resources to hire more capable staff, so we have been multi-functional…. Good to get some extra payment… But sometimes, we get overloaded with daily tasks' (NP7).

Besides concerns about personnel capability that needed to be built up to enhance the network's capacity, network leadership and its long-term development was another issue that might influence VNCDF's performance. The concern about the network leadership will be presented separately in section 6.3.5. The view of the network's long-term development emerged from discussions on ACVN's structure and development strategy. As an informant put it: "I'm afraid that ACVN will change its operational direction by not including the community process in its activity priority" (NP3). Talking about the organization's structure, one respondent reported: "The organization has a development strategy but it was the output of an international funding capacity building which doesn't have a specific operational plan" (NP8). Another participant pointed out another weakness of the ACVN organization. She said: "[The organization] is an important channel to approach local governments in Vietnam but I'm not sure how it will develop. It doesn't have a value statement or a clear vision with an active strategy to achieve that" (IC3). Talking about the same issue, a participant reported the unsatisfactory performance of the VNCDF network: "The activities are not planned in advance and I find it quite a rush to receive information from the national team" (TP1). A participant, in the same vein, discussed ACVN's project-based activities and the need to define a long-term mandate and financial sustainability plan: "ACVN projects are not self-initiated, and very donor funding based. I would think that ACVN need a long-term strategy, which consistently guide the organisation's development," (NP3). These views were openly agreed to by a leader of ACVN. She referred to the issues of the organisation's human resources: "…We do need to improve the organization's professionalism and structure, but how can we do it if you look at the human resources that we have…"

The above section has described the results of the change in the VNCDF network's management into ACVN in order to strengthen the bridging relations among the VNCDF members. Specifically, ACVN's urban government membership and ACVN's hybrid status have been reported to function as resources that enhance bridging relations in the VNCDF network. In addition, the results of these factors showed the influence of the legal framework of NGOs and the uncertainty of VNCDF's long-term development because of organizational capability issues.

6.3 Network management cohesion

Besides network legitimacy, network management cohesion arose as another thematic category of enabling factors for the operation of VNCDF. The theme circled around the relations of members of the network's management team at both national and city level (cities of the housing case studies), illustrating five aspects of relations: long-term relationships, mutual understanding, team work, shared values, and leadership.

6.3.1 Long-term relationships

Discussions relating to network management cohesion drew attention to network staff members' long established interpersonal relations. Participants expressed that most current key players from regional, national and city level, had known each other since the network's inception in the early 1990s. Examples include:

> [The key network staff] were involved in community projects since early days. We have known and been working with each other since then (NP6); I was not involved from the beginning of the network, but we have known each other when we were working in development and community-based projects (NP3); The network coordinator was recommended by the regional network manager because they knew each other since [VNCDF network coordinator] was working for another international project of the same field (NP1).

Another statement illustrated the special connection between key network members:

> [The two programme key implementers] were like a married couple since the beginning in the 1990s. One was very enthusiastic for activities in Vietnam and the other was always supportive and acting at regional level. They are both so passionate about poor communities… (NP6).

Similarly, a key player shared her feelings: "Every time I come to Vietnam, I feel like coming back to the family, to the community, with people who know each other for a long time and that is the good way to work together for the poor".

In addition to the relationships initiated before the projects, participants also expressed their ongoing relationships that were sustained beyond the project phases. One example was: "In fact, project staff and community members of different cities still get in touch and get updated about their situation through phone, Facebook…" (NP3). This was observed during the fieldwork. VNCDF project team members, including the national network staff, city project staff and people from the neighbourhoods, communicated with each other on a regular basis through the network's periodical exchange missions or skype conferences. During field work, the author joined several events of the network and observed the members' interactions and behaviours. They shared the same hotel rooms, talked in a friendly manner to each other and shared both their personal lives and their projects' activities. They even planned visits to each other's cities and project sites.

6.3.2 Mutual understanding

A sense of mutual understanding amongst VNCDF key members was commonly expressed in the data, showing participants' understanding of their colleagues' strengths and weaknesses. For example, a participant said: "… [Some project staff] may not be very specialized experts and professional, but they cooperate well to complete their tasks. If the staff are all highly ranked experts, then the working environment will change," (RP1). Other interviewees provided similar views, recommending the need to build capacity in the staff:

> Enthusiastic people like [the young professional team leader] is really good. He was involved in voluntary work since he was undergraduate student, but I have always advised him to [continue to deepen community work expertise and follow some academic training to be more qualified] (NP3); [The junior staff] is a very enthusiastic young and friendly person, with a heart for poor communities. This is important to work with poor communities…but I told him that's not enough to work in international project, he need to improve English skills… (NP1); I have mentioned this to [the network manager] that she should allocate more tasks to younger staff to avoid being overloaded… She should focus on guiding work and provide more training for junior staff (NP3).

This understanding of their colleagues' strengths and weaknesses helped to define roles. For example, one participant said: "[The project expert] is very experienced in working with communities, very hard working but sometimes she is too rigid with local communities so in many cases, we have to intervene and make decisions" (RP1). Likewise, another participant pointed out the proper role a colleague can do well based on her strengths and weaknesses: "[…] is very strong in working with communities. I don't think that anyone can substitute for [the expert] in this regard, but [the expert] may be not the best one to provide strategies and direction… or speak in front of high ranking official audience …"(NP3).

6.3.3 Team work

Team work came out of the data as another aspect in VNCDF's management cohesion. The view surfaced mainly in the commitment of ACVN young staff to support VNCDF activities and the communication accessibility of VNCDF network staff.

The commitment of young ACVN staff was expressed, for example, in the following discussion: "I like the working environment here. That's why even though the salary is not high, I don't want to go to another place. Here, everyone is friendly and support each other," (NP5); "I'm just working part time, some other staff are not working for this project, but we are willing to help whenever needed," (NP4). These statements were comparable with the author's observations and group discussion with

ACVN staff. Everyone was friendly and supported each other in preparing for project activities. They reported that they may get an extra allowance for their contribution into the work depending on the activity budget. However, according to the respondents, normally there was no contract in advance; they did the work on a voluntary basis or as requested by the network leader. One reason for the staff's collaboration expressed in the discussions of participants was the fact that there was not enough staff and all ACVN staff were normally in activities of different projects.

Another aspect of the team work related to the possibility that the staff members could communicate with each other at any time to discuss work. For example, participants reported:

> It is very good that I can call the [network manager]. Mme [the network manager] is very accessible mostly anytime, except when she is on the plane…[smile], because you know there are issues that we need to discuss and decide quickly so that we could send information to the regional office or the cities (NP4); [One staff] is not based in Hanoi but we called and talked with each other on the phone nearly every evening to discuss about the management of projects. We had the open phone policy so can call anytime of necessity (NP1).

This accessibility of network members was frequently reported:

> I got regular phone calls from project staff in other cities to ask for advice on how to deal with their projects' issues… (VC1); Many times, I felt discouraged with the project situation in my city and called [the national project team member] for advices mostly anytime, even when she is oversea… (TP2); I called [a community project leader] each time I wanted to ask for experience from his project. He even called me sometimes to ask about our situation. I learnt a lot based on how he managed to solve difficult circumstances and mobilized the community (TP2).

6.3.4 Shared values

VNCDF staff members' shared values centred on expressions of their job commitment and working in poor communities. The view was illustrated by a participant, referring to the reason for ACVN's involvement in VNCDF: "The programme was not a big grant, with no management fee but we agreed to cooperate because it was supporting poor urban communities," (NP2). This view was echoed by another respondent that:

> ACVN doesn't get paid for their management of the network, and ACVN staff work on a voluntary basis, except some permanent external positions like the coordinator and the full-time young professional leader… (NP1).

In the same way, another interviewee reported her committed involvement:

> The network's exchange missions were organised very intensively with meetings until very late to appraise communities' proposals. We travelled from communities to communities, hundreds of km within a day, very intense and minimum standard of accommodation but felt great to see communities' work… (NP7).

Reporting about the same experience, another respondent commented that: "You don't enjoy those kinds of trips if you don't have a true heart for the poor communities… you know, it's different from other activities, normally organised in fancy hotels…." (NP4). In addition, the commitment of network staff was acknowledged by residents:

> Mr [the project staff] stayed [in the neighbourhood] for weeks to help our upgrading project. He slept in the community temples for nights, no electricity just candle light, quite scary… but he did not mind (TP6); …[The wall picture in the common yard] was drawn by the young architects. Just before the day of new house celebration, [the young professional team] said they wanted to make the common ground more colourful and fun for the kids, so they brought paint and draw the wall picture (TC8)

6.3.5 The leadership

VNCDF network's management cohesion accentuated the role of the network's manager[75]. Four broad themes emerged from the analysis, including: reliability, the linking role, the leader's characteristics, and the unsustainable nature of the role

The linking role

The linking role of the network manager emerged from discussions on the implementation of the VNCDF network. A common view amongst the participants was that the network manager played an important role in the operation of network activities. For example, one participant used a metaphor to describe the role of the network manager: "… the network has three strong women [the regional manager, the VNCDF manager and the VNCDF coordinator], especially Mme …, - the soul of the network…" (NP2). Other examples particularly indicated the linking role of the manager:

> In many cases, when we had difficulties in accessing city governments, we asked [the manager] to call and talk with the city government officials to speed them up in the work (NP5); Mme [the network manager] is very helpful. She knew what worked and what did not and provided good advices to deal with issues related to all levels, with central government, cities and the communities… (NP3); So if there is difficulty in contacting

[75] VNCDF network was managed by the National Coordination Board comprising the network director, the network manager and network coordinator. While the Director was more of a diplomatic role, the network manager was directly leading the network in Vietnam, together with the coordinator.

> [city governments], I always ask her to help and call [city governments]" (NP4); Once the project starts and thanks to Mme [the manager]'s talking with the city government, then we had the project started, then we had the whole block rearranged... (TC1).

The leader's characteristics

The network leader's role was perceived to result from her characteristics especially her prestige, personality and skills, and motivation.

Prestige

Views of the network leader's prestige arose particularly from participants' discussions of the transfer of the CDF network into ACVN's management. In relation to this, a participant reported: "The former national network coordinator approached ACVN to take over the network because she had known [the network manager] before, since the time she was working in [a national university] …" (NP3). Talking about this detail, the network manager reported: "[The network former coordinator] called me and explained about the work and a potential cooperation with ACVN...She invited me to join a network event in person but I proposed her to invite [another leader of the organization] too…" The view was commented on in the following statement which draws attention to the role of the network manager in the transfer of VNCDF and the importance of the ACVN organization: "…CDF network needs to collaborate with an organization like ACVN, but it may have not been like it is now. It was good to know the [the network manager] in the leadership of ACVN."

The theme of the network leader's prestige also came up in the following discussion:

> …. [The manager] is the leading expert in the urban management field of Vietnam… (NP1); …Most of the highly ranked officials in the Ministry of Construction used to be her students or colleagues at the university so she can contact with them very easily … (NP4); She is known to be a very responsible supervisor and has strong expertise in [the national university]… (NP5).

Personality and skills

Another reason for the network manager's influence in the VNCDF operation was her personality and management skills. For example, a participant emphasized the leader's prestige was not only based on her title but her reputation:

> City government officials respect her not only for the title professor or doctor, which, you know… is a normal case in Vietnam. … But for her knowledge and kindness. She was supervising some of them in their post graduate studies before they came in the current positions (NP7).

It was also reported that: “She knew how to mobilize the strengths and weaknesses of each team member; she understood their challenges… not only the office staff but also people in the cities and communities” (NP6). This view was complemented by some other respondents’ comments about the manager’s caring and thoughtful personality. For example, a staff described that the leader reminded them to prepare specialities from Hanoi when they visited the cities but she hardly took advantage of her position to request for privileges from the cities. On the other hand, the network manager was considered decisive and straightforward. For example, one staff member put it:

> … [The network manager] is very strict and straightforward. She worked hard and quick so we also had to roll on with her… If there is anything wrong, she was very straightforward, but we understood that it was for the sake of the work, nothing personal (NP8).

In a work trip to a city, the personality and communication skills of the network leader were noticeable, in terms of the way the network manager delivered the meeting’s opening speech, starting with fact-based compliments on the city’s potential. She spoke with a warm and chest voice, expressing her respectful cooperation with the city. This was different from other leaders who were more bureaucratic and talked to local governments in a hierarchical way.

The same view of the VNCDF manager’s personality was expressed by city staff in both case studies, emphasizing their respect for and positive impressions of the network leader. For example, participants said: “Mme [the network leader] is very cheerful. She is very supportive and encouraging” (VC1). “[The network leader] is a University Professor, and leader of a big organization, but, is not like other central high ranked official, she is very friendly and close to us…” (TP2). During the field trip, I could observe the network leader’s behaviour and her relationships with staff. She prepared snacks for the staff when they had a busy day preparing for a big event. She also reminded staff about the birthdays of staff members and always brought them some small souvenir or local speciality after each of her trips.

Personal interest

Another characteristic was the network manager’s interest in the work that she was doing. This view surfaced mainly in discussions on the manager’s enthusiasm, work energy and open-mindedness. For example, one participant reported about the leader’s enthusiasm to learn:

> [The manager] is very special. She tries hard to learn and communicating in English, only bother us to do translation for important document or emails. She reads carefully all relevant reports or documents to understand better the projects or areas of concern… (NP6).

Discussions about the network leader's energetic enthusiasm were prominent, which could be understood to be a reason for her active involvement in the network operation. Examples were:

> Bac (Auntie) [the manager] is very enthusiastic in the work and can be approached any time. She is such a person of actions and that is very important for our network (NP5); …She works very hard and reacts to projects' communication very quickly. No other leader in the organization could do that, young people like us sometimes have to catch up with her… (NP3); In urgent cases, we communicate with each other at mid-night to send the feedback to international partners (NP6).

Another statement referred to her open-mindedness compared with other people of her generation:

> She is very special… not easy to find another similar person because most of those at her age are likely to be more conservative, inactive and bureaucratic because they are from the subsidized time… but [the network leader] is very open-minded, and adaptive with the change...(NP3).

Collectively, the above writing demonstrates the trusted role of the VNCDF manager, which suggests her influence in the reconsolidation and operation of CDF network in Vietnam. However, issues were reported regarding the long-term involvement of the network manager.

An unsustainable role ?

Participants' indicated that there were problems with the organization's management, mainly in relation to the work load of the network leader, the performance of people in other senior positions, the gap between senior and junior staff and ACVN's leadership replacement plan (NP 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, RP3, RP2, IP1, 2, NC1, 2, 3).

Concerns were first expressed about the network senior manager's workload. Examples include:

> Because she is capable, she is involved in many different international programs and external consultancy contracts (NP4); the role of other members of the secretariat is not very strong. I don't want to tell the name here but only one secretariat member is working. It is a waste of money, resources (NP3); other leaders are not much on top of things, so Mme… has to take charge of most international projects… so sometimes… [Things went wrong] because you know, we can't do everything, each people has limited capacity… (NP5).

My in-depth interview with the VNCDF network manager also reflects these views. She expressed that she many times felt overloaded and wanted to quit but she had to continue because of the unavailability of other co-managers. In fact, observation data showed that other leaders in the

organization were not working effectively and efficiently; they did not have necessary skills in English, computer and international project management.

Besides the performance of other co-leaders in the organization, the gap between two layers of staff was mentioned as a reason for the network leader's workload. As one participant said: "There is a gap between senior and junior staff and the lack of a moderating role in between two layers of staff" (NP7).

The unsustainable position of the network leader also emerged from participants' worries about ACVN's leadership replacement plan. This view first concerned the possibility that the network leader would quit the job. As one participant commented:

> Mme [the network manager] is at her senior age and has thought of retiring because of her health and her family (NP4); …I'm very concerned about the change of VNCDF leadership if Mme [the manager] gets retired and encouraged her to continue at least as the advisor for the network if she can't directly involve (NP3).

Another participant also expressed the same concern by reporting his talk with the network manager:

> I said to her that she has been involved in the network from the beginning and understood it well so she should continue at least until the end of the programme, as no one could do the job better than her… (NP1)

In the same vein, another participant said: "If the current network manager quit, then we never know what will happen to the future of the CDF network in Vietnam" (NP7). Based on personal observations during the fieldtrip, the ACVN leaders were discussing a succession plan to seek replacement of existing leading positions, but there was no comprehensive recruitment system in place; position placements were likely to be decided based on the introduction of the leadership members' personal acquaintances.

Overall, the above describes the features of VNCDF's management cohesion in terms of the long-term relationship, mutual understanding, team work, shared values and leadership network. These factors exhibit relations within VNCDF's management team, which presumably had significant impacts on the VNCDF's operation. Despite the evident human capital, there were concerns about VNCDF's capacity and its long-term sustainability, especially if the present charismatic leadership was lost. These results suggest implications that will be discussed further in chapter 8.

6.4 The network learning approaches

Data showed that the network had become one where, through sharing experiences upwards and between different communities, it had become a learning network that featured three key approaches: the involvement of both urban governments and communities, the sharing of motivational practices and the adaptive application of lessons learnt.

6.4.1 The involvement of both local governments and communities

Generally, the involvement of both urban governments and poor communities was informed by the analysis of a document on the organization of exchange activities:

> Exchange missions are organized among communities of similar socio-economic situation, and/or having similar issues of concern to be solved. It can be among communities within a ward/commune or between wards/communes in a city which is normally organized through city wide mapping; between cities in the same region, across different parts of the country or even between communities overseas (City Alliance, 2013).

Discussing these activities, the VNCDF coordinator provided more details:

> For each activity, ACVN office sends invitation to city governments, identifying the number and component of participants… In all cases, Governments and communities of projects are invited… They meet regularly in national community forum to report their work results (NP3).

The involvement of both urban governments and communities was believed to facilitate the exchange among poor communities and between poor communities and urban governments. For example, one participant reported: "Exchange visits[76] are an effective tool for experience sharing between the hosts and visiting communities. Often community groups meet and learn from each other" (NP5). In particular, these activities were demonstrated to focus on poor communities' role. As the regional network coordinator reported: "Communities are crucial parts of the exchange events, normally poor communities …they meet and learn what others are doing and to break the isolation of their individual experience of poverty" (RP3). A key network staff member supported this view, providing detail on how exchange activities were organised to enable local communities to present their experiences: "As communities are key implementers, they are the presenters. Most event programmes are designed for group discussions, communities' presentations…We even organize event meals in the communities, very casual…," (NP4).

[76] An exchange visit is a term used by VNCDF to refer to a type of activity organized periodically for poor communities and city governments to meet and share experiences. These activities are organized at national or regional level.

In addition, the involvement of both urban governments and poor communities was described as enabling local government to be more informed about local communities' practices as in the following quotes:

> This network's activities are different, we have the forum of both city governments and communities … good for decision makers to be informed of communities' work and concerns' (NP5); The network shared lessons on communities' self-help initiatives, which was necessary for the communities, but also important to change the mind-set of governments and also other stakeholders in the system (NP3).

This view was illustrated by government representatives, like in the following:

> We learnt a lot from the way how the project mobilizes and works with the community. It offers a new way of involving the people in solving the problem of the city (A Vinh city government official).

The involvement of both local government and poor communities was reported as a substantial change in VNCDF's approach. For example, a VNCDF project staff member said: "… Before the network activities were mainly organized with communities and women union, but it has been changed to involve multi-level of stakeholders in all missions and events' (NP6). Commenting on this change, a VNCDF coordinator said: "It has been learnt that in Vietnam, we need to work with local governments, so in all events, the delegation from each city always comprise of representatives from both city CDF management team and communities".

In summary, the involvement of both local government and communities created a learning network that was aimed to enhance poor communities' exchange and their connection with urban governments; this combination, in addition, reflects a change in the network's approach. The next section presents the results of the network's second approach: the sharing of motivational practices.

6.4.2 The network of motivational practices

The sharing of motivational practices surfaced mainly in relation to how the two case studies were motivated by other communities' experiences. The Friendship project was stated by participants to have learnt from the practical experience of Thai communities. Participants, overall, expressed in their interviews the motivation they had after the exchange mission to Thailand of one resident, which significantly encouraged their commitment to join the project. For example, a participant stated: "We were inspired by the stories about Thai communities that Mr [a Friendship neighbourhood resident] told after his trip to Thailand" (VC1). A resident who participated in the exchange mission to Thailand reported: "It was not until after our visiting trip to Thai communities'

projects did we have a better understanding about upgrading approach". This view was complemented by other examples:

> … He shared all details that he learnt during the trip... we were curious and excited to see how their project looked like. [The Thai experience] motivated us because it was a true story of real people and real work ("nguoi that viec that – a proverb in Vietnamese") (TC8).

> We learnt that the projects helped poor communities to improve their houses….we were not sure why [the project managers wanted to help us] … but we knew that [the projects helped poor communities like us]. We saw that other poor communities could do the project so we thought that there's no reason that we could not care for ourselves… so we tried harder… (TC1).

The experience of the Friendship project was eventually shared with other communities in Vinh city and nationwide. For example, one participant reported: "Many experience exchanges had been organized between Friendship and other neighbourhoods in Vinh city' (VC8); and "Seven to eight other communities were under way of replicating the project [Friendship community's project]" (VC1).

Likewise, the Binh Dong 1 project was motivated through VNCDF activities and by projects in other cities. Examples of these comments are:

> Yes, the city joined the network and got to learn from other projects… then the project was introduced to Bing Dong 1 neighbourhood. You know… (NP6); And we came to visit other projects, like the one in Soc Trang or Vinh city and we saw these projects were addressing similar problems that we were facing so we were willing to join, (TP2); Tan An city got involved after the Vice Mayor was invited to attend VNACCA exchange event in other cities like Soc Trang and Ben Tre (NP5).

With the same view, another participant described an exchange event organized in Binh Dong 1 that: "On March 23rd, 2012, a three-day training event was organized with the participation of community architects, and people from other communities, including the [Friendship project leader and delegates from other cities]," (TP2). The result of Binh Dong 1 project was later introduced to other communities of Tan An city. As the Tan An Vice Mayor expressed: "We have replicated the project in ward 5. We have to continue and some other wards are reviewing public land to apply the project approach. We still have many immigrants' households along canals".

6.4.3 The network of adaptive application

Adaptive application was reported to be another approach of VNCDF's learning network that enabled flexibility and community self-reliance. As a VNCDF staff member said: "Flexibility and learning by doing offers the spaces for the communities to discuss and find the better solution" (NP6). This view was illustrated by the Friendship project leader:

> I do not expect other communities to replicate totally our lessons, as this is not a "Text book". Housing projects need to be very flexible based on their real situation

The respondent then continued, alluding to the notion of "contextual adaptation", by saying that:

> I advised them to be very flexible and have proper solutions based on their local context: economic condition, education background, mind-set of the communities for example. For example, the people in [another city], they did not want to share walls and foundations; they also built the houses separately…

Binh Dong 1 project staff similarly reported: "I got many advices from the national project team and [the Friendship project leader]… it really depended on what was happening in the neighbourhood. That's why we let them discuss and decide what they wanted to do…" The adapted project approach was also reported by the city Vice Mayor of Binh Dong 1 project that: "The project did not happen like what we saw in other projects. Like Binh Dong 1 did not have a community project leader, or they had to save longer before being able to start the project…" This view was supported by the following statement of a project staff member: "We are learning by doing. Everything is new from projects to projects. We don't have a formula but always have to draw the lessons and do new things in different places" (NP7).

6.4.4 The role of community project leaders

Another approach of VNCDF's learning network involved the role of community project leaders. Particularly for housing projects, the Friendship project leader took an active role. In the opinion of the VNCDF project team, the Friendship project leader was a special case because he actively contributed to the operation of the national network. The view arose, for example, in discussions with key project team staff, including:

> He has been actively engaged in many National VNCDF activities. He is a key member to share the project experience with all other city members of VNACCA (NP3); He has also represented VNCDF communities to share about the project in many international and national conference and platforms… (NP5); He had real experience and knowledge about the

> community process so he has been invited to share experience in many national and international events (NP4).

Interviews with key informants on VNCDF also showed that the ACCA housing projects in other cities strongly consulted the Friendship project leader. Examples of this view included: “Mr … was very enthusiastic and gave us good advices. He has been a reliable contact whenever I have challenges in the project” (TP2); and “[the Friendship project leader] gave many valuable advices,” (HC3). Consistent with these views, the Friendship project leader reported his advice to a resident of another housing project:

> I told her that to be successful, we need to act for the common benefits, not only for individuals [about issues related to land use right]… Now the project has been completed and they are much happier with the big houses in the big street…

The Friendship project leader’s role was acknowledged by the fact that, in 2012, the Friendship project leader was elected as a member of the “National Community Champions” for the pioneering role in community work and active contribution to VNCDF activities. The reasons for the Friendship leader’s performance have been described in chapter 5.

The above examined the approaches applied in VNCDF’s learning network, which involved both city governments and urban poor communities and was based on the motivational and adaptive application of implemented practices. These approaches were useful in the achievements of the two case studies therefore implying their role as bridging mechanisms. However, the data show issues related to the transfer of the case studies to other communities of the same city. The following section will present these issues based on each case study.

6.4.5 The uncertainty of the learning network

Issues were reported regarding the uncertain transfer of the case studies’ experience to other communities in the same cities. The following uses the term “replication” to refer to the application of the processes and approaches used in the case study to another community.

The uncertain replication of the Friendship project circled around the unsuccessful application of the previous ACCA upgrading approach to other communities of Vinh city. Based on interviews and document analysis, the Provincial Upgrading Program 109 under Decision 2007 was due in 2015 but had been extended until 2017; by April 2015, 73 of 156 public residential areas had been upgraded with different solutions varying from individual *in situ*-upgrading resettlement for high rise apartment development (Vinh city, 2015, p. 1). According to one city government official, among these implemented projects, none followed the Friendship project.

This unsuccessful replication was explained as a result of the institutionalization of upgrading procedures by the Vinh city government and the lack of community related factors. For example, participants commented on the city government's upgrading policies:

> The issuance of the 14 steps based on the lessons of Friendship project did slow down the replication in other communities (NP5); [The regulated procedures] identify rigid steps and therefore making it hard for the communities to follow… obstacle for a community driven process that really need flexibility and adaptation (NP3).

On the other hand, factors related to the neighbourhood's internal issues were also emphasized as leading to the unsuccessful replication of the Friendship project. As participants said:

> … [The upgrading process was slow] because some neighbourhoods had failed to resolve their problems due to many reasons (VC4); The neighbourhood could have been able to follow the project if Mr [a project leader in another community] had not died. He was very keen to follow our project but unfortunately, he suffered a cancer and died (VC3).

Another statement suggested the role of social forces, alluding to the notion of local government's overloaded capacity and the reliance on communities' advocacy role:

> But [the city government] is very busy with hundreds of jobs and thousands of tasks [a saying translated from Vietnamese, which means 'a lot of work'] so [the city government] has to rely on communities and [other social organizations]… Sometimes, we don't understand the situation as well as the local residents. So they need to tell us and we do what we can… The baby needs to cry to be breastfed by the mother… (VP1)

This view was echoed in discussions on the potential of government's flexibility to promote community driven upgrading process. For example, one city government official said:

> The upgrading of public housing areas is the city's very high agenda. …. The city's policy is flexible and tries to gradually address from easier cases to more difficult ones. The orientation is to address as many areas as possible, so they are very open to any possibilities, as long as it is not illegal and get the consensus of the community. Two among the fourteen institutionalized steps are not important… so we have to be flexible (VP3).

This view was also informed by the report of Vinh city (2015) discussing reasons for the city's failure in fulfilling the Provincial Decision 2007. Besides institutional issues related to land use management, social reasons were identified related to the community factors in terms of socio-economic conditions and the lack of internal agreement on upgrade solutions (ibid, p. 2-4). In addition, the documents state the city's intention to promote the remaining upgrading tasks by flexibly applying special mechanisms for particular issues that were not clearly identified in the legal framework.

The uncertain replication of the Binh Dong 1 project featured a contrasting upgrading approach compared with ACCA's approach (a community-based approach, see chapter 7). The Binh Dong 1 project was introduced to another community in another ward (ward 5) of Tan An city; according to participants, the project was implemented with strong involvement of the ward 5 authority[77] and was not totally led by the local families. Examples of this view included:

> The project in Ward 5 has been much faster as it is implemented by the ward authority... (TC3); they have a very nice and square piece of land. The ward authorities are strongly involved… there are 18 families, including … 12 local families and 6 from outside (TP2); the houses were built by a contractor, there was no specific person from the community to take charge of monitoring the process but someone hired from outside… (TC15)

The strong involvement of the Ward 5 authority in the second project was reported to result from the city government's criteria that the upgrading project will be approved only if it has the strong commitment of the ward authority. According to Tan An CDF members, this criterion was aimed to reduce the burden on city government in dealing with local communities' internal processes (see section chapter 7).

The uncertain replication of the Binh Dong 1 project also emerged from the discussion with a Tan An city government leader. It implied scepticism about poor communities' saving and loan repayment ability. As he put it:

> I think the saving and loan payment will help them [the Binh Dong 1 community] to change the habit of spending all or even more than what they earn during the day. But it is hard for them to save money for 5 years. It is easier if, like other project, we grant them with the house right away, without any debt; it is a good idea to introduce the method to private donation partners and ask for the money to raise the fund. But this is quite new and we haven't tried. I don't know if those partners are interested in this approach because what they want is to have something visible and right away

In summary, although VNCDF's learning network sought to use lessons learnt in project implementation to facilitate replication in other parts of the cities based on the network's advocated approach of learning (as presented above), these lessons may not have been helpful when applied to other contexts, which reveals the uncertain transferability of the network's upgrading ideas. This result suggests implications regarding the functioning of VNCDF's learning approaches in the

[77] Ward 5 is another ward in Tan An city. Binh Dong 1 is in ward 3. The disinterest and non-participation of ward 3, according to Tan An project team caused many challenges for the project. This content is described in detail in chapter 7.

network's longevity. These implications will be discussed in chapter 8.

6.5 Conclusion

The chapter has provided insights into the mechanisms that influenced the operation of VNCDF as a bridging mechanism under which the research's case studies were implemented. These processes featured the mobilization of network legitimacy, network management cohesion and network learning approaches for VNCDF's operation and were determined by multiple factors summarized in Table 6.1. Apart from insights into the determinants of VNCDF's bridging relations, the chapter has presented results on the changes adopted by VNCDF and the uncertainty of the network's longevity informed by concerns about the network's capability, leadership and approaches. These results suggest important implications for the functioning of the determinants of bridging relations that will be addressed in chapter 8. The following chapter will present the results about the operation of the determinants for linking relations between communities and local governments.

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Network operation</td><td colspan="3">The formation of bridging relations in VNCDF network</td></tr>
<tr><td>Influencing factors</td><td>Norms/Forms of relations</td><td>Bridging capital for the upgrading projects</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Network status</td><td>National legal framework;

Nature of project issues (land and housing)</td><td>Urban government membership;
ACVN's hybrid status</td><td>Network legitimacy</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Uncertain long term network's development due to organizational factors (staff, leadership, development strategies, staff…)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Network's internal relationship</td><td>Inter-personal relations</td><td>Long-term relationship;
Mutual understanding;
Team work;
Shared value;</td><td rowspan="2">Network management cohesion</td></tr>
<tr><td>Leadership characteristics:
Reliability;
Prestige;
Personality and skills;
Personal interests;</td><td>Trustworthy network leadership role</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Uncertain network management due to organizational factors (staff, leadership, development strategies, staff…)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5">Network's activities</td><td>Network approaches</td><td>Exchange among communities;
Connection between poor communities and city governments;
Learning from motivational practices;
Adaptive application of lessons learnt;
Involvement of community project leaders</td><td>Learning network</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Uncertain learning network</td></tr>
<tr><td>Institutionalization of upgrading procedures

Neighbourhood's internal issues</td><td>Unsuccessful replication of Friendship project in Vinh city</td><td rowspan="2">Uncertain learning network</td></tr>
<tr><td>Institutionalization of upgrading criteria

Neighbourhood's issues and local government's trust in neighbourhood's capacity</td><td>Distorted replication of Binh Dong 1 project in Tan An city</td></tr>
</table>

Table 6.1: Result summary – formation of bridging relations in VNCDF network

Chapter 7

Linking relations

7.1 Introduction

Moving on from examining the bonding and bridging relations in chapters 5 and 6, chapter 7 investigates the formation of 'linking' relations, which, in the context of this study, refers to the partnership between communities and city governments in the housing upgrading projects. The emphasis is on the factors that formed and shaped the relationships between the two parties during the upgrading process. This chapter's main content is structured on the basis of two relationships: the community's collective upgrading and the city governments' collaboration. In this chapter, VNCDF refers to a recognisable formal entity that is the network of community development funds operated in Vietnamese cities. The national coordination team includes a VNCDF manager, a VNCDF coordinator, VNCDF community experts, and Young Professional (YP) team members[78]. City CDF refers to the network of community savings groups in each city. The city CDF team includes a city government leader and a city project secretary. The ACCA "community-based upgrading approach" is shortened to the ACCA approach.

7.2 Community participation in a collective upgrading process

The linking relations of the upgrading projects were partly formed by the participants in the two neighbourhoods. In both case studies, the collective upgrading process was enabled by the ACCA approach and the cooperation among the residents that was mobilized in the post-conflict phases of the upgrading project (see chapter 5). The difference between the two case studies is that the collective upgrading process of Friendship was guided by the community project leader, but the collective upgrading process of Binh Dong 1 required stronger support from the VNCDF project team. The nature of the ACCA approach and the collective upgrading processes undertaken in each case study are therefore important if the formation of the links between these communities and their local governments are to be understood.

[78] The Young Professional (YP) team included a leader who is a full-time staff member of the national VNCDF network, and voluntary interns who are undergraduate students or young graduates of relevant background like architecture, economics, law, and environmental management.

7.2.1 Community-based upgrading approach

The ACCA approach was found to be a critical factor that enabled the collective upgrading process in both case studies. The ACCA approach emphasized the communities' roles as the "key doers" in the upgrading process. This view was highlighted by key informants, for example:

> We make the communities a part of the project. They develop solutions and secure finance instead of waiting to be told by the Government. We should let them work hard to provide housing for themselves (RP2); Instead of being seen as the problem or the passive recipients, the poor themselves become the doers to deliverer solutions for their situation (NP3); …The role of donors or project staff is not major in local projects. Projects are mostly done by the communities and there is hardly any intervention from outside (RP1).

To enable the "key doer" role of communities identified in the above statements, the ACCA approach adopts three key principles: to mobilize communities' internal resources through collective loan and saving schemes; to involve communities in the horizontal learning network of city governments (VNCDF network); and to promote a community driven planning process facilitated by external experts. The first two principles have been presented in chapters 5 and 6, respectively. The following section describes implementation of the third principle.

The national coordination team played its facilitative role by conditionally intervening only in necessary cases. For example, a VNCDF coordinator expressed the view: "[The project team at national and city level] only facilitated [neighbourhoods' internal processes] by providing management guidelines and advice for difficult cases' (NP3). This intervention, nevertheless seemingly differed between the two case studies. Friendship's internal processes were more independent. As a Friendship resident reported: "We only contacted [a project team member] once in a while to report our situation. We were mainly following our own way… as we understood the system" (VC1). Binh Dong 1, on the other hand, needed more support from the project team. However, the data show that project team members mainly asked residents' opinions and provided them with advice, as opposed to making decisions for the community. The following statements illustrate this view:

> … Ms [VNCDF coordinator] and [the city CDF secretary] came again in January, 2012. They explained the project and consulted us if we wanted to build our house together on the provided public land (TC7); For about one year, from…March 2012 to March 2013, while we were saving money, [YP members] came at least once a month. They stayed for some days, talked with everyone… (TC6); in the same month of [the planning workshop organized in September 2011 that failed to achieve the expected result]

> the project staff member came back. He talked with each of 15 families to understand our situations… (TP2); We discussed the project for a long time, then [the project management team members came]… We confirmed that we wanted to do the project (TC8).

In addition, the facilitative role of the external experts was demonstrated in the type of technical assistance provided for the project planning, which was reported to facilitate residents' decisions about their situation-based planning options and to help present the technical planning document. The technical assistance for Friendship was provided by a local voluntary architect, whereas the technical assistance for Binh Dong 1 was mainly based on the YP team. The involvement of a local expert in Friendship, according to VNCDF project team, followed the ACCA approach that specifically encouraged the involvement of local resources and people. As participants said:

> [A local architect in Vinh city] was very enthusiastic and helped us to draw the planning document (VC3); [Binh Dong 1 residents] received technical support from the young students…to develop the neighbourhood layout document (VP2).

The facilitative role of external experts was also demonstrated through the techniques used in project activities. For example, a Binh Dong 1 resident said: "They used a paper map and small pieces of colour cards to simulate households and everyone was actively discussing about the potential location of each house lots." (TC2). An example about Friendship was: "We had a fun event ... We made houses with cardboard, brainstormed and drew the neighbourhood plan… easy to understand and visualize" (VC1). A project staff member described the techniques used: "We used…crossing Q&A, mutual understanding games, open ended questions and in-depth interviews to generate inputs about what was going on in the communities, and the condition of each family" (NP6).

Overall, these results confirm that the processes used by external experts followed the ACCA approach, emphasising the facilitation of community decision-making and thereby strengthening the key role of communities in upgrading projects. Importantly, the ACCA approach emphasized conditional external intervention that recognised the differences in the capacity of the case study communities, highlighting a connection between external intervention and the neighbourhoods' internal conditions. The implications of this will be further discussed in chapter 8.

7.2.2 Friendship's collective upgrading process

Aside from the ACCA approach, the participation of Friendship in the upgrading project was enabled by the mobilization of the neighbourhood's internal cooperative relations that led to a collective upgrading process. This process particularly featured the role of the community project leader and the residents' cooperation in the different project stages: saving, project proposal, neighbourhood planning, construction permit registration, and house building.

The project proposal stage of the Friendship project emphasized the community leader's role. For example, participants expressed the view:

> We were not among the seven communities targeted to implement the projects [the neighbourhoods targeted had more spacious land plots and the families had better economic condition]. Mr Hung represented our neighbourhood to join the workshop[79] only as an observer but he proposed to implement the project in our community (VC4).

According to participants, Mr Hung was nominated by the neighbourhood to join the workshop because he had previously been an active member in proposing upgrading solutions for the neighbourhood. Other details about his participation and the successful proposal to implement Friendship project have been described in chapter 5, section 5.5.4.

The development of the neighbourhood layout (project planning stage) was based on the agreement of the whole community. The following examples demonstrate the neighbourhood's participation in the planning stage:

> We joined communal meetings to discuss the neighbourhood design in terms of storey numbers, lines, alleys, cost per square meter…We agreed to design two house blocks [a block of 2 storey houses and a block of 3 storey houses] to meet different needs of different families. …, (VC5); We came up with different solutions but finally decided to have a common internal lane of 5 metres in the middle of two rows of houses, and the house size was equally divided to be 43.7m^2 (VC8) (Fig. 7.1*)*

The application for project planning approval and construction permit, again particularly featured the role of the Friendship project leader. This procedure was challenging because Friendship's neighbourhood planning did not meet the provincial regulations on house size standard (see section 7.2.2). The role of Mr Hung in advocating for the Provincial government's approval was described in some responses showing the residents' reliance on his leading role, presented in chapter 5, section

[79] The workshop was organized by the CDF network in collaboration with the Vinh city government to select the neighbourhood for a demonstration upgrading project under the ACCA approach.

5.5.4. It was, in addition, illustrated in the following statements, implying an influential representative role of the community leader in the relations between the community and city government:

> [The application process] took a very long time, up and down… up and down… and Mr [community project leader] was going back and forth for months… (VC8); He went to see the Provincial Department of Construction almost every week to submit extra document. Mr Hung was in charge of preparing the papers then we all signed our signatures … (VC5).

The collective house building process featured the collective purchase and use of construction materials and especially the sharing of the house structures. For example, participants alluded to economic benefits:

> The houses were built at the same time. We bought materials together at a wholesale price so significantly minimizing the cost (VC1). We signed a collective contract with the construction material supplier…. They were kind enough to let us deposit just a minimum amount and kept the original price even when the market price increased… (VC3); We urged each other to reuse broken bricks. We saved each meter of electricity cable and steel as we continuously cut them for one house after another (VC4) (Fig. 7.2); We also contributed labour to the construction. We took part in clearing the sites, we gathered reusable materials and put them all together… (VC5); …Our houses share foundations and walls and that helped to reduce the cost (VC5).

These above statements on the neighbourhood's collective actions drew attention to a strongly cooperative process as a result of the mobilization of the neighbourhood bonding ties described in chapter 5. At the same time, the responses alluded to the economic benefits of collective action as the outcome of their collective process, which may suggest it as a factor that motivated the people in the process.

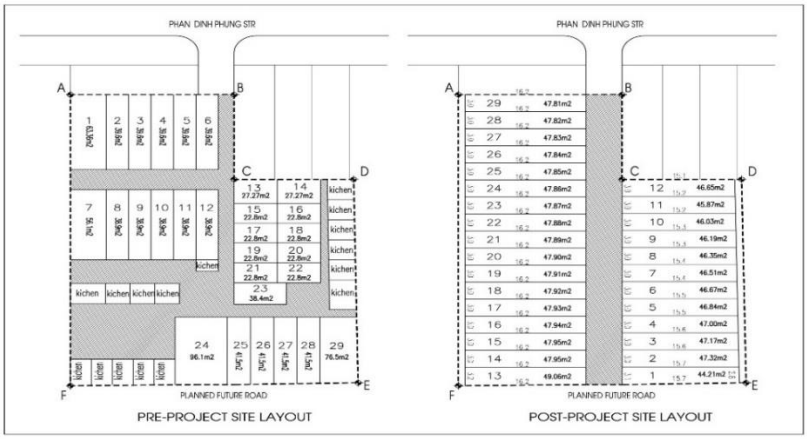

Figure 7.1: Friendship layout before and after the project (Source: VNCDF document archive)

Figure 7.2: House construction in Friendship project (Source: VNCDF document archive)

7.2.3 Binh Dong 1's collective upgrading

Like Friendship, community participation in Binh Dong 1 featured a collective upgrading process that eventually took place after a prolonged period of internal discussion and conflict resolution. The difference was that the Binh Dong 1 project did not have a trusted neighbourhood leader during project implementation but, instead, engaged external support from the VNCDF project team in facilitating the neighbourhood's internal discussions and their collective participation in the upgrading process.

The upgrading process of Binh Dong 1 started with an inactive role of the community in proposing the project and a lack of community cooperation because of internal problems, i.e., the lack of interpersonal trust and a community leading role (see chapter 5) and a mistrust relationship between the community and local government. The project, it seemed, was proposed by the ward authorities[80], as a participant said: "At the mapping survey, Ward 3 authority was very enthusiastic and proposed to join the project …" (TP2). The scepticism of Binh Dong 1 residents about the project was expressed in the following statement:

> One day, I saw "Ong noi Nga"[81]- coming with a camera. I was scared as there had been some rumours that we would be asked to move out because the government would take over the land and sell it (TC9).

[80] Ward 3 is the grassroots administration unit in charge of the area in which Binh Dong 1 is located. It is considered a level of local authority under the city government level.
[81] a Southern local phrase for "unexpected disturbing guy",

Commenting on the event that caused the people's scepticism, other participants said: "Later on, I understood that he came for the low income housing project so I had some light of hope, but very small, nothing to assure us...," (TC6); and

> Before the project began, the city advertised the whole piece of land for sale and there were actually some guys coming over to see the land, but they never came back. We were living here and were advised "put forward a proposal to buy the land", but no way…. we did not have the money (TC7).

The people's scepticism about the government's project and the other internal problems of Binh Dong 1 (presented in chapter 5) resulted in the initial stage in people's unwillingness to cooperate with each other and with the city CDF to implement the upgrading project. However, the findings show that, after 5 months of internal discussion (see chapter 5, section 5.4), Binh Dong 1 residents showed their willingness to cooperate with the government and started to take collective action. Discussing the planning of neighbourhood layout, residents said:

> "To allocate the house location, we considered the time that the families had been staying on the land, and the contribution in clearing the land surface," (TC9; "We considered sibling relationships, families were allocated plots next to each other," (TC3).

A participant specifically illustrated her contribution in the planning process:

> "When discussing, I asked if we could arrange the houses in a way that we would have a common space for the kids to play and everyone agreed. And then [the recreational area was included in the drawing[82]] and it appeared to be close by," (TC8).

The planning stage was completed with the organization of a planning workshop facilitated by the project team (Fig. 7.3). The outcome was a developed planning document (Fig. 7.4). The altered layout included two sections of houses (shaded yellow on Fig. 7.4), a community house (blue shading) and open spaces (grey dot shading). These areas had previously been, respectively, occupied by some houses, and wild bushes. As a participant reported: "At the end of the three working day session, with our help to illustrate the residents' ideas on paper, the community had in their hands a planning document and they then started saving" (NP5). The neighbourhood's collective savings and use of the project loan were described in chapter 5, section 5.5.1. The neighbourhood planning approval and construction permit registration were smoothly approved by local government because, unlike Friendship, Binh Dong 1 did not encounter upgrading regulatory challenges. In fact, the Binh Dong 1

[82] The recreation area is shown as white spot in the top left part of Figure7.3)

upgrading project, as reported by the city government leader, was under the control of and supported by the Tan An city government.

The collective house construction was a highly motivated process in which the residents worked together and supported each other to build the houses (Fig. 7.5). For example, participants said: “We were very motivated at this stage and together cleared the land to build houses” (TC7). The participation of Binh Dong 1 residents featured in their role in managing the construction process in terms of choosing the builder and managing the construction materials. The neighbourhood’s collective contract with the builder was recorded that: “We were guided to look for the [the builder] that would provide the most reasonable quote” (TC8). The statement, however, demonstrates the guiding role of the project mediator, described in section 7.3.3 . The use of materials was demonstrated in the following statement: “We reduced the construction cost by reusing the destroyed houses’ materials like wood, plastic pannels, even some doors” (TC3). This re-use of materials was observed by the researcher. It markedly helped the residents to reduce building costs. The economic outcome of the collective house building process of Binh Dong 1 was comparable with Friendship.

Figure 7.3: Binh Dong 1 project planning workshop (Source: VNCDF document archive)

Figure 7.4: Binh Dong 1 lay out before and after the project (Source: VNCDF document archive)

Figure 7.5: Binh Dong 1 site clearance by the residents (Source: VNCDF document archive)

Overall, the results above describe the collective participation of two neighbourhoods in their upgrading projects. This illustrates the influence of the ACCA approach and the mobilization of the neighbourhoods' internal bonds. A significant difference between two neighbourhoods is in terms of the representative leading role and the level of external support from the VNCDF network. This difference suggests implications for the interrelations of the different dimensions of social capital relations and for the concepts of social capital and community participation. These matters will be further discussed in chapter 8.

7.3 City governments' collaboration

The collaboration of city governments in the upgrading projects essentially formed the linking relations in the upgrading projects (the partnership between the communities and city governments). The city government's collaboration seen in the case studies was based on the city

government's commitment to address the upgrading mandate, the flexible enforcement of local regulations, and the role of project mediator. In addition, the analysis also shows the results of the government's responses based on the lessons learnt from the implemented collective process.

7.3.1 The government's mandate commitment

The data show that both case studies' city governments (Vinh city for the Friendship project and Tan An city for the Binh Dong 1 project) were committed to follow the ACCA housing projects because of the urban upgrading mandate which was equally expressed to have resulted from ineffective urban planning. By committing to implement upgrading, both cities provided support in terms of technical assistance, land, and tertiary infrastructure investment that were described as the city governments' functional support.

Friendship urban upgrading mandate

The upgrading task of Friendship belongs to Decision 2007 (see chapter 4, section 4.2). As introduced in chapter 5, section 5.2, the poor condition of Friendship was a remnant of the national subsidized economy and resulted from inadequate public housing management policies. In addition, the issue reflected the ineffectiveness of an urban planning system showing an inadequate urban infrastructure system. This seen in the following statements:

> Infrastructure around the area had been developed while Friendship community appeared to have been forgotten" (VC1); "Our area is just behind the big houses of the Vice Director of Commerce and Industry Department...the area is surrounded by high buildings and we are always flooded with waste water" (VC7); "There was no drainage, sunlight and wind circulation... because of being badly affected by the tropical weather and insufficient maintenance" (VC5).

The ineffectiveness of an urban planning system equally illustrated the unfeasibility of local planning regulations. The following quote indicates this:

> "[The Provincial Decision 2007] was expected to accomplish by 2015. Yet, in reality, it has never been accomplished as it was so ambitious and would have costed hundreds of millions of US dollars… It is just a general framework without an efficient action plan,…is still on paper" (VC1).

It could be argued that the urban planning system was also too rigid as demonstrated by the difficulties with the redevelopment plan of the Friendship area before the introduction of the ACCA project. For example, participants reported:

> "Because the regulations identified a minimum housing standard to be $50m^2$, the Province's in-situ-upgrading plan could not be implemented due

> to the limited land area" (VC8); "There was still no solution to the Province's decision. We continued to struggle in the poor condition and were waiting for solutions under the Provincial Decision 2007" (VC6).

These results showed that Vinh city government collaborated to implement the Friendship project in order to fulfil the urban upgrading mandate. As a part of the city's work plan, the Friendship project was provided with functional support in terms of technical assistance and infrastructure installation. Specifically, to help Friendship develop its planning scheme, the Vinh city government invited the local voluntary architect to work with the neighbourhood during the planning process (see section 7.2.1). The local government also funded the installation of infrastructure, as was recorded in the following statement: "The ward authority helped us to clear the site… a huge job and could only be done by the local government…. And also the installation of water pipes and electricity wires. All was funded by the ward authority" (VC8).

Binh Dong 1 upgrading mandate

According to key informants, the government's upgrading mandate was the main reason for Tan An city joining the VNCDF network and implementing the pilot project in Binh Dong 1. The city's upgrading mandate was illustrated in the following statement, alluding to the notion of a 'social policy':

> It is the national policy to clear illegal settlements along the canal system…clearly defined in the Province and Party Committee Resolutions and has become an essential task of Tan An city. So we have to do it (TP1); We can't push them away, they are too poor so the government has to find a way for them (TP1); Illegal squatters along canal system in the Mekong delta region is an urgent task for all cities located in the area (TP2).

The reasons for the implementation of the ACCA housing project were further illustrated by the fact that Tan An city was struggling to find a solution. For example, a participant stated: "The city government wanted to solve this problem many times but still did not have a proper solution" (TP2). This view was echoed by a leading urban expert in Vietnam that: "Some major cities have been selected to implement the national urban upgrading programme by the World Bank, some smaller ones have not been selected so, they are still struggling to find the way…" (NC5). In addition, the upgrading mandate was found in the Tan An VNACCA project document[83] as: "The ACCA housing project is aimed to mobilize resources to address housing needs, especially for the marginalized groups like the poor and low income people in the city" (Tan An project document, 2012).

[83] The city development plan has been described in detail in chapter 4, page…

Like Friendship, Binh Dong 1's poor housing condition also featured public policy externalities that resulted from the uncontrolled population movement in the early 1990s and institutional weakness in public land management, particularly in the areas along Mekong River (see chapter 1). Tan An city government provided functional support for the project in terms of technical assistance to improve the planning document quality as a city leader stated: "… but to have a qualified planning document, the department of construction was assigned to correct the map". In addition, the city government funded the installation of tertiary infrastructure, as a participant acknowledged: "[the city government]…helped the project when we needed to install the water pipes and electricity… Now we don't have to buy electricity and water from private suppliers…" (TC8). Different from Friendship, Binh Dong 1 received another type of support in terms of incentives for loan payment. As a city staff member said: "To promote loan repayment, the city government offers free interest for those families repaying the money within 2 years and there have been some families committed to do so," (TP2).

In summary, the above describes factors relating to the upgrading inquiry of the two case studies, which showed evidence of an urgent upgrading task identified in the development plan of both the Vinh and Tan An city governments. The upgrading inquiry revealed the remnants of the country's national economic reforms and the prevailing weakness of the urban planning system. To address the upgrading task, both city governments showed their commitment by providing functional support for the project's implementation. These results, therefore, exhibit the factors that influenced and illustrated local governments' collaboration in the upgrading projects, therefore providing insights into the formation mechanisms of the linking relations examined in the case studies. Chapter 8 will revisit this point.

7.3.2 Local policy flexibility

The flexibility of local policies was found equally in both case studies. Nevertheless, this theme reflected distinguishable conditions of the cases and the context under which they were. The Friendship project featured the change in local regulations related to the provincial house size standard[84], land use payment, construction permit and local construction inspection function. The Binh Dong 1 project, on the other hand, involved formalization of Binh Dong 1's illegal status, land use payment, and a change in the project's local management team. The following will report these matters in detail.

[84] Decision No 146/2007/ QĐ-UBND, dated 19/12/2007, says that the minimum size of a house slot to be certified is 50 m^2.

Friendship project

The flexible enforcement of local policies in the Friendship project surfaced mainly in relation to the provincial house size standard[85], the land use payment, the construction permit and the local construction inspection function.

Flexible house size standard

Analysis showed that the size of Friendship's divided house plots was incompatible with the province's regulated house standard; this obstacle, therefore impeded and prolonged the project's planning approval procedure. This view came from discussions on the project planning approval procedure. For example:

> Because we equally divided the land for all families, each house had only $47m^2$, which was smaller than the standard size of $50m^2$ (VC8); The challenge was that we could not get the approval of the Provincial Government because the house size was $3m^2$ less than the regulated house size" (VC1); …the Provincial Government hesitated to approve the plan because it violated the regulated house size standard (VC9).

However, as the data showed, the provincial government finally approved Friendship's planning document by adopting a flexible policy. This result was reported by the Friendship project leader: "After three months of advocating, we got five red approval seals on the plan document. This was unprecedented, and had never happened in any construction project before".

Delayed land use payment

Having the neighbourhood planning approved, construction of the Friendship project could proceed to applying for a construction permit. To follow this procedure, Friendship needed to complete the land use payment and get Vinh city government's house construction permit. According to participants, Friendship was allowed to delay the land use payment. As an individual put it: "…We were allowed to delay land use money payment[86] to start the project construction. Normally you have to pay all the land use payment loan before you can actually build the house…" (VC6).

Informal construction permit

However, a challenge was again related to the house size standard. According to a participant (NP5), the city government did not officially issue the construction permit because the house size was

[85] Decision No 146/2007/ QĐ-UBND, dated 19/12/2007 says that the minimum size of a house lot to be certified is 50 m^2.

[86] In Vietnam, land belongs to the state and only the land use right is allocated to organizations and individuals. They must pay land use money to have this right, based on the land size, land use purposes, exit (see Land Law 2013, dated 29/11/2013, Decree No 45/2014/NĐ-CP on land use payment regulations, dated 15/5/2014).

smaller than the regulated standard. This was overcome through the notion of a "government oral order". As a participant said: "After all advocacy efforts, as soon as we got the "yes" oral signal from the city government, we quickly started the project, without waiting any further. That was enough for us. "Khau du cung nhu chi du" (VC1). The oral nature of a decisive approval refers to an important feature of the norms of feudal Vietnamese society when the king's oral order was considered as official as a written one. Flexibility in the local construction inspection function was reported by participants regarding the government's ignorance of illegal construction work, which was described by participants to be a type of local government practice that ignored and let illegal affairs happen because of necessity. As a participant put it: "During the construction process, the security team could not stop us… even though there was no official approval from the city government. It was a kind of process with "Mat nham mat mo" [translated to be: with one opened eye, one closed eye]" (VC1). The following comment of a city official expressed this view: "[Friendship project] was a special case and we needed to apply special regulation. The regulation was different but we saw it as necessary, so we let them do the project…" The existence of such a typical mechanism of government collaboration, as reported above, resulted from central government's upgrading mandate and the community's lobbying role, especially by the Friendship project leader. Discussing this achievement, the Friendship project leader said:

> If you see it right but it is not legal, you have to pretend not to see it and let it get done without any signed document, as you never want to sign something illegal and you don't want to lose your position for that.. (VC1).

The responses indicated the role of the head of the Vinh city CDF project team (city Vice Mayor) as is made apparent in the following statement:

> The city would never issue an official permit for the project construction because it did not adhere to the existing construction standard regulations, but [the head of the city CDF project team, who was also the city Vice Mayor] did not oppose the project. He in fact saw that it was necessary. He orally said yes we can do it… so we could go ahead with our project, (VC2).

The supportive government leader

The government leader's support and commitment was described as because of his long-term participation in the CDF network and his understanding of the concepts:

> "In fact, [Vinh CDF leader] had been in charge of the project since the beginning of VNCDF network in Vietnam in the early 2000s" (NP6); "He understood our situation so he did what he could within his power [as vice Mayor] to support the project" (VC7). His commitment was additionally emphasized in the following comment: "City leaders are always very busy

> but [the head of Vinh CDF network] has been always enthusiastically involved in all project activities and missions" (NP3).

Concern, however, was expressed regarding the move of the Vinh CDF leader to another position. As the VNCDF coordinator stated: "… After the completion of Friendship neighbourhood project, [the network leader and city Vice Mayor] in charge of the project has moved to another position so I'm not sure how [the Vinh city CDF network] will continue…"

The above reports the flexibility of local policies adopted for the Friendship project. The following section describes the flexibility of local policies adopted for the Binh Dong 1 project.

Binh Dong 1 project

The formalization of Binh Dong 1

Unlike Friendship, data analysis shows that Binh Dong 1 faced no regulatory upgrading planning challenge. Instead, Binh Dong 1 reported the city government's policy on formalizing the neighbourhood's illegal status. This policy surfaced in relation to two events: the government's allocation of public land for Binh Dong 1 to build houses; and the grant of identity cards[87] for Binh Dong 1 residents. The government's allocation of public land for Binh Dong 1 to build houses was expressed, for example, in the following statements:

> "It was the city's permission for us to legally build our houses on the public land" (TC6); "The city allocated the river accessible land for our community. They know that we do fishing for a living, so it's convenient for us to stay here." (TC1); "Even if we had the money, we didn't know if we could have such a piece of land to build houses on" (TC9).

Like Friendship, Binh Dong 1 was allowed to postpone the land-use money repayment. A participant appreciated the point: "We were illegally occupying the land… but the government allowed us to build houses here… we will still have to repay the land-use money but we are very grateful…" (TC3).

Another aspect of the city government's formalization of the illegal settlement related to the grant of citizenship to Binh Dong 1 residents. Participants, in all cases, expressed their appreciation for getting the identity cards. For example:

> "We are illegal squatter in this place. We don't have any official identity as we don't have clear origins… Now we have become recognised as residents. We have our identity. Our kids can register their marriage…they can find jobs. [It is hard to get a good job if you don't have a residence permit]" (TC1).

[87] A kind of administrative certificate, acknowledging an adult citizen status.

The view was echoed by other participants: “We have better living conditions now, we have identity, and our children can go to school” (TC8); “We used to live day by day with no residential identity, no guarantee for tomorrow before the project. Now we have become normal citizens,” (TC1); and “Our children can go to school now, and the daughter of Mr [one of the resident] can register her marriage at the ward authority…” (TC9).

Participants in the national and city project teams also commented on the change of Binh Dong 1 residents’ status:

> “After the houses were built, Tan An had the policy to issued identity cards and residential certificate for the residents… They are no longer considered illegal occupiers” (TP2); “To Binh Dong 1 residents, their registered identity was a significant achievement, besides the physical housing. They have now become a recognized part of the society,” (NP5).

The above quote suggests an important type of enabling mechanism for linking relations being the formal recognition of the formerly illegal community, created through the housing programme.

The lack of interest of local authority and support from the city CDF team

As discussed earlier, the Binh Dong 1 project was originally suggested by the Ward 3 authority. However, the Ward 3 authority was reported to eventually have lost its interest in implementing the project, which, according to Tan An CDF project team members, made it difficult to address the internal problems of Binh Dong 1. As the Tan An CDF leader said: “The lack of cooperation of both the ward authority and the community at the beginning was so challenging and made the project stagnant for a long time”. Reasons for the change in Ward 3’s collaboration were reported to be the unexpected type of upgrading project and also scepticism about the feasibility of the ACCA approach to be implemented in Binh Dong 1. The following illustrates this view:

> “After a learning visit to Soc Trang in November 2011, the Ward 3 authority realized that the project just provided a small loan and helped the community to build their own houses by establishing a savings group. The ward authority then no longer cared about the project” (TC3); Because they thought an international upgrading project normally brought big money, they were initially very excited but then, they realized that it was a community-based project and did not believe in its feasibility” (NP6).

The reported challenges of the Binh Dong 1 project because of internal problems and the inactive role of the local authority were overcome by the stronger role of the city CDF team.

Community members urged the Tan An CDF leader to take a leading role in the project. One commented that:

> "Many times, I had to ask for the support of the Vice Chairman of Tan An People Committee to call Ward 3 authority to attend in community meetings. He had to directly solve the problems in the community" (TP2); "Though [the Tan An CDF leader] may not [fully understand the academic meaning of the project's participatory approach], he appreciated that it was helpful to mobilize the poor to solve their problems and change their lives' (TP2); "During the project, Mr [Tan An CDF leader] attended the meetings in the neighbourhood many times in order to understand [the residents'] situation, and even helped explain points to balance [the residents'] arguments' (TP2); "He is very kind and supportive…I can call or come to meet him any time if need be" (TP2); "He was very enthusiastic and willing to come if there is anything that the community needed to discuss and clarify" (TP2).

In addition, involving the city women's union was a solution to address Binh Dong 1 project's challenges. A staff member of Tan An city women's union, as a result, was assigned to be the city CDF secretary, also called the project mediator, whose role is reported in detail in the following section. The involvement of this person, as reported, resulted from the intervention of the VNCDF national team. The following statements demonstrate this view: "VNCDF's national management members came to Tan An and recommended to the city to involve the women's union…." (TP3). Talking about this intervention, the VNCDF coordinator reported:

> "From other projects' experience, we rely on the role of the Women's Union to support the community development process. Tan An project was facing difficulties and we had a meeting with the city government and proposed that city women union should be involved" (NP3).

The results above show the idea of the ACCA approach of engaging an intermediary actor to link the relations between the community and the city government. Collectively, the results indicate that, though the approach in both communities is similar, the way in which the local community capital was linked with vertically linked with government structures differed between the two cases. Sometimes this was quite clear and in other instances more subtle. Although the types of local policy flexibility of the cases were distinguishable, both cases featured the supportive role played by the city government leaders and the need for a lobbying role of either the community (Friendship project) or the VNCDF network team (Binh Dong 1) in achieving key changes in local policies that enabled the projects to succeed. The result has, therefore, provided additional insights into the factors that influenced the formation of local governments' collaboration in the two case studies. The implications arising from this will be further discussed in chapter 8.

7.3.3 The role of project mediators

The secretary role played by a staff member from the city women's union in the city CDF network management team can be seen as project mediation. In Vietnam, the Women's Union belongs to the local government structure, but is considered an intermediary agency to connect local neighbourhoods and local government. The role of project mediators was found to be prominent in the ACCA housing projects but differed between the two case studies. Though this role in the Friendship project mainly focussed on facilitating the operation of savings and loan payment, this role in the Binh Dong 1 project was stronger in supporting the neighbourhood's internal processes.

Vinh city's project mediator

As noted previously, the mediator for the Friendship project was a staff member of the Vinh Women's Union – the agency collaborating with the city government to manage the Vinh CDF community savings groups and community projects. The mediator was the main contact for the Vinh CDF management team to communicate with VNCDF's national team and the local community. Interviews with participants reported the general role of the project mediator in supporting the neighborhoods' internal processes and linking them to local government to address issues related to their projects. For example, a participant reported: "She goes to each community group so she talks directly with the people and understands the situation" (VP3). However, in the Friendship project, the mediator's role was reported to mainly coordinate savings groups and loan management. As the project mediator said: "We are working directly with the communities to guide them on how to set up and maintain the savings group. I closely coordinate with the Friendship community to instruct them concerning the repayment of the $40,000 loan".

Tan An city's project mediator

Like Friendship, the Binh Dong 1 project mediator represented the Tan An Women's Union to collaborate with Tan An city government in managing the Tan An CDF network's community savings groups and community projects, in the role of Tan An CDF secretary. However, unlike Friendship, the project mediator's role was reported to be critical in the Binh Dong 1 project because she not only coordinated the neighbourhood's savings group and loan payment but also supported the upgrading process. Based on participants' discussions, four recurrent themes emerged from the data, including: her roles as a neighbourhood supervisor, a project approach safeguard, the mediator's motivation and concerns about the mediator's subordinate role.

The neighbourhood supervisor

The data show that the project mediator functioned as a supervisor of the Binh Dong 1 neighbourhood. Unlike Friendship, Binh Dong 1 did not have a trusted community leader. Instead, Binh Dong 1 was supported by external factors including, among others, the city project mediator, whose supervising role was illustrated, for example, in the following statement:

> "Although [the project mediator] felt exhausted, [the project mediator] was still concerned about our situation, … sometimes, when she had free time during the week and even weekend she just quickly drove her motorbike here and talked with some of the people" (TC8);

Another example illustrated her role in supervising the loan repayment: "The community was made to hand in money before the Tet holiday as she knew that otherwise, they would tend to spend all the money for Tet" (NP5). The mediator reported her role in supervising the neighbourhood's internal discussion period:

> "I said to them that I would leave them to sort things out among themselves and make their own decisions, but I would be around if they needed help"; "… I frequently visited to talk with the residents, not only with one or two residents but also others to double check the accuracy of the information and to quietly monitor the savings process".

The mediator's role, in addition, was expressed by the residents, for example in the following quote: "We thank [the external player] so much. She was with us during the whole project." This view was comparable with the researcher's observations during fieldwork that the project mediator was warmly welcomed by the neighbourhood residents when she came. In their talk, the project mediator encouraged the residents to speed up their loan repayments and share information about the government's land use policies.

The project approach safeguard

The view on the mediator's role as the project approach 'safeguard' surfaced mainly in discussions on her intervention to ensure that the Binh Dong 1 project followed the ACCA upgrading approach. This was clear from interviews with the national project team members, residents of Binh Dong 1 and the city project staff member herself. For example, a participant said: "The city wanted to appoint some construction contractor to build the houses but [the mediator] insisted that the project requirement was to let the community decide" (NP6). In the same way, another participant commented: "She helped to ensure [Binh Dong 1 project follow the ACCA-upgrading approach]" (NP5). Talking about this, the staff member reported: "The city government wanted to build houses and then allocate the built houses to the poor, I tried to explain to the city vice mayor to follow the

project approach". In addition, the mediator reported her following the VNCDF's guidelines in facilitating the neighbourhood's independent discussion: "I was advised by the national project team that [internal conflicts] were normal and we should let the community solve the problem among themselves… so we let the residents discuss things with each other". Other evidence showing the mediator's safeguard role was revealed in relation to the mediator's role in helping Binh Dong 1 manage the house construction: "We were guided by [the women union staff member] that we should find the best builder ourselves…. "(TC8). The positive impact of enabling the community to manage its own project as a result of the mediator's intervention was described in the following statement:

> "The residents managed the house building themselves. That's why they did not complain about anything, not like another case [an upgrading project in another city[88]] where the houses were built by the government and the people were not happy about the quality and design" (NP6).

The personal motivation

The implemented role of the project mediator was expressed, in the interview with her, to relate to her personal motivation. First, in relation to fulfilling her job mandate, she said:

> "Before, the support of the Party and People's Committee was only on paper. Now, it has changed, as the mass organization members, we have to act on what we have promised"; "I thought the job was like other jobs. But, it turned out that I had to travel a lot. I was not used to that, and felt busier but I was happy as I was doing my job, to work for the poor people"; "I did not receive any extra salary but did the work voluntarily. The allowance for project activities was not enough… sometimes, I paid the travel expense from home to the airport and did not claim on the city budget"; "…But I'm much supported by my organization in terms of time"; and "I like the new approach of working that involves the poor in deciding their life development".

Besides the mediator's will and job commitment to work for the poor, the findings show her motivation to connect with the government and other stakeholders in the network. For example, she said:

> *"*I also had the chance to meet the city government….."; "….but in this project, I can easily approach the City Government representatives"; "I have the chance to meet national and international experts and learn from them to think clearly, their presentation skills, and confidence…"; and "… to

[88] Regarding this, the experience of an unsuccessful VNACCA housing project was shared that the houses were built for the people by local government. The community was not happy with the houses because of poor quality and an unfavorable location. The ward authority staff dare not go to the community because they are afraid of being blamed.

> travel, and meet people, learning about their customs and traditions"; and "… to exchange with other cities' Women's Unions and poor communities to improve my work experience".

The subordinate role

However, concern about the subordinate role of the project mediator emerged from discussions on the changes in the Tan An management board that showed no intention of the city government to engage with the mediator's role in the project process. The supplementary role of the mediator was, in addition, expressed in the following statement of a city official: "It is good to have a women's union staff member to support the process… but only… mainly to communicate with the residents…" (TP1). This view was echoed by the concern of another participant: "…Mass organizations are always considered as non-important participants" (TP2). One saying describes the local government's traditional view on the subordinate role of the mediator is: "Being just a city People Executive staff is even much better than being the chief of mass organizations…." (TP3). In the same way but discussing a broader context, a participant commented on the role of intermediary agencies in the administration system of Vietnam: "In Vietnam, the role of mass organizations like the women union is not really pro-communities. They are considered part of the government's system and in most cases, their job is to execute state policies' (NP1). In supporting the ACCA approach, the Women's Union was essentially supporting the government approach to introduce market-based thinking and strengthening local democracy.

In summary, the above describes the role of the project mediators in linking relations between the community and local government though the roles were distinguishable between the two cases. This role was not strong in the Friendship project, but it was critical in the Binh Dong 1 project. This difference is consistent with the reported difference in the cases' internal conditions and the level of external intervention needed. The overall finding connects with the discrete internal conditions of two neighbourhoods discussed in chapter 5, suggesting important implications regarding the conditions for the role to perform. Concerns about the subordinate role of the project mediator in the Binh Dong 1 project, in addition, suggest the uncertainty of the role, which seemingly was related to a broader context. These implications will be discussed in the following chapter.

7.3.4 Local governments' lessons learnt

As discussed previously, a key factor in the success of the case studies was the flexibility with local regulations. However, the data show that because flexible policy enforcement was considered difficult to continue, the city government in each case study issued a guideline based on the lessons learnt from the implemented projects.

Vinh city's neighbourhood upgrading project guide

To facilitate the replication of the Friendship success, Vinh city published a 14 step guide for a neighbourhood upgrading project. Opinions about this regulation development differed on whether it would hinder the community-based process or whether it was necessary to ensure regulation enforcement. The more widely held view (of city government officials, VNCDF team and even the residents of Friendship) was that the guidelines were well-intentioned and helpful. The view arose, for example, in the following statements:

> "The 14 steps actually slowed down the upgrading process but on the other hand, helped local government to ensure the enforcement of regulations," (VC1); "The institutionalization of the project steps was the city's good intention to make sure all steps were clear and well check-listed," (NP3). A reason for the issuance of the upgrading guide was illustrated by a participant: "Because it would be difficult for the city government to manage the same kind of "temporary legal flexibility as what has happened for Friendship community" (VP1).

The last statement alludes to the notion of the unsustainable practice of the change in regulations. The following statement echoed this view with a metaphor of political position's gambling in the Friendship project.

> "It is important for politicians to follow their career goal. [They wanted to follow the legal regulation to accomplish their tasks and get promoted even though they knew the institutionalization of upgrading steps would slow down the process]. They do not want to gamble their political position another time" (VP2).

The following statement of a city official expressed the same view emphasizing the advantages of following existing regulations.

> "… As it would be easier and more realistic to complete the city upgrading tasks according to the Provincial Program 109 [called Provincial Decision 2007 described in chapter 4, section…] _ as it ensures the procedures of Land Law, Construction Law, and Provincial by laws' (VP4).

Tan An city's engagement with upgrading partners

Based on the experience of the Binh Dong 1 project, Tan An city government showed an intention to engage with partners, including the ward authority and enterprises, in other upgrading projects.

As presented previously, the non-participation of the ward authority, according to key informants, was perceived to lead to the challenges of the Binh Dong 1 project. These challenges led to the participants' concerns about the sustainability of the upgrading practice in Binh Dong 1. As a city project staff member stated: "If [the city vice mayor] and myself are no longer involved in the

project management, then who will take care of these projects?" (VP2). Consequently, Tan An city government, after the Binh Dong 1 project, identified that an upgrading project needs to have strong commitment of the ward authority to be approved. This criterion was demonstrated in the following comments:

> "Binh Dong 1 project did not have the strong commitment of Ward 3 authority… That's a lesson learnt for the city government. Now the government only approves projects if they have the strong commitment of ward authorities' (TP2); "…so, the city government has decided that the commitment of ward authority is the primary criteria for other project proposal. Otherwise, we will move the project to other wards' (TP1).

The following statement by a city project official clarifies the involvement of the Ward 5 authority in a replicated project (See chapter 6, section 6.4.5), alluding to the notion of "reduced burden" for city government: "The leaders of the local authority [Ward 5] are more enthusiastic so I don't have to worry much. It is easier for the city government. [The ward authority] just asks for opinions whenever there is an issue" (TP2).

Business enterprises were another partner that the Tan An city government leader referred to in his discussions about the continuation of upgrading projects. Although the leader acknowledged the "new way of doing" in ACCA housing project, he expressed a scepticism about the possibility of sustaining the "community based saving and loan payment" approach. For example, the leader said: "[The project] has provided us with a new approach. What we have done so far is normally to ask for funding to build houses for the poor from Business Cooperation and Enterprises." On the other hand, he showed scepticism about the approach:

> "It is a good idea to introduce the method to private donation partners and ask for the money to raise the funds. But this is quite new and we haven't tried. I don't know if those partners are interested in this approach because what they want is to have something visible and right away."

The reason for engaging the support of the business sector resulted from the perceived uncertainty of the project loan repayment. For example, the city government leader said: "They are still saving to pay back the loan but we are concerned about the speed… Some seem to be behind as they tend to slip back to social evils." The following statement exhibited another participant's view on the uncertainty of Binh Dong 1's loan payment, signalling the notion of mistrust in the community: "The community was made to hand in the money before the Tet holiday as … knew that otherwise, they would tend to spend all the money during Tet" (TP2). The effort needed to monitor Binh Dong 1's loan repayments was further expressed by the city government leader: "We need to monitor [the

Binh Dong 1 residents]'s loan repayment to have money for the next community….not so much sure because they have a lot of problems; they don't have stable jobs and tend to overspend".

The above reports the responses of local government based on the lessons learnt from the case studies. The Friendship project led to the development of a 14 step-based upgrading guide and the Binh Dong 1 project resulted in the city's attempt to involve stronger participation of partners like the ward authority and the business sector. These reactions imply the uncertain longevity of the type of government collaboration that existed in the case studies. Implications on the uncertain collaboration of local government will be discussed in the following chapter.

7.4 Chapter conclusion

Altogether, the chapter examines linking relations between communities and local government in the two upgrading projects. Two sides of this relationship have been described including the participation of the two neighbourhoods in a collective upgrading process and the collaboration of the Vinh and Tan An city governments. In addition, influencing factors for the relationship from each side have been described. Specifically, the upgrading processes of the two neighbourhoods were enabled by the ACCA community-based upgrading approach and the cooperation of the neighbourhoods that resulted from the mobilization of their internal bonds. The collaboration with local government was formed by the commitment to implement the urban upgrading mandate, the flexible enforcement of local policies, and the role of project mediators. The responses of local government in developing regulations based on the lessons learnt from the case studies, on the other hand, suggested concerns about the longevity of local government collaboration, therefore influencing the maintenance of the linking relations in the projects. A summary of the chapter's results is presented in table 7.1. Implications from the results of this chapter, in combination with those of chapters 5 and 6, will be discussed in chapter 8.

Actors in Linking relations	The formation of linking relations in Friendship project			The formation of linking relations in Binh Dong 1 project		
	Influencing factors	**Norms/Forms of relations**	**Linking capital**	**Influencing factors**	**Norms/Forms of relations**	**Linking capital**
VNCDF network	ACCA upgrading approach	Operational norms: Participatory upgrading approach; Community's internal resource mobilization (Chapter 5); Learning network of both local government and communities (Chapter 6)	Community empowerment	VNCDF network	Operational norms: Participatory upgrading approach; Community's internal resource mobilization (Chapter 5); Learning network of both local government and communities (Chapter 6)	Community empowerment
Community	Neighbourhood's bonding ties	Neighbourhood's collective participation in upgrading		Neighbourhood's bonding ties	Neighbourhood's collective participation in upgrading	
City governments	Institutional issues: Urban upgrading mandate; Weakness of urban planning system	Regulation flexibility (housing standard, land payment, residence permission)		Institutional issues: Urban upgrading mandate; Weakness of urban planning system	Regulation flexibility (housing standard, land payment, residence permission)	
	Leaders' characteristics	Supportive and trusted leadership		Leaders' characteristics	Supportive and trusted leadership	
	Job mandate	Intermediary Actor's roles in assisting the management of Vinh city's CDF network		Job/personal motivation	Intermediary Actor's roles in: Safe-guarding ACCA upgrading approach; Supervising Binh Dong 1 project	
	Uncertainty of city governments' institutionalization of upgrading procedures and neighbourhood issues; Uncertainty of communities' long-term relation (Table 5.1); Uncertainty of VNCDF's organization capacity and the learning network (Table 6.1)					

Table 7.1: The formation of linking relations in the two upgrading projects (Original)

Chapter 8

Discussion

8.1 Introduction

This research set out with a general intention to critically examine how social capital operates in a local collective and community based initiative, specifically attempting to explore how bonding, bridging and linking capitals are formed, mobilized and maintained in a community based housing upgrading process. The previous chapters 5, 6, and 7 have reported results on how bonding, bridging and linking relations were formed, mobilized and maintained around two Vietnamese ACCA housing upgrading projects. The study results suggest the emergence of a conceptual framework that features (1) the formation of social capital, which is based on multi levels of societal resources and moves beyond the dichotomy of civil-society and the state; (2) the mobilization of social capital that is interdependent and adaptable; and (3) the maintenance of social capital, which is unpredictable because of the uncertain longevity of societal resources if not actively maintained. This chapter is structured around these features of social capital formation, mobilization and maintenance

8.2 The formation of social capital based on multi-level-resources

Social capital has been discussed in in chapter 2 in terms of different societal levels including individuals (Bourdieu, 1980, 1986; Coleman, 1988, 1990), community (Putnam, 1993) and nation (Fukuyama, 1995). Social capital has also been studied in terms of its components, such as personal family-inherited social values (Bourdieu, 1980; Coleman, 1988), trust, cooperation, and norms of reciprocity (Putnam, 1993), and structural and cultural (attitudinal) norms (Hooghe & Stolle, 2003). The formation of social capital has been, at the same time, categorized into a civil-society centred approach (see, for instance Putnam, 1993; Coleman, 1988) and a state-centred-approach (Bourdieu, 1980, 1986; Tarrow, 1996; Häkli & Minca, 2009) (see chapter 2, section 2.2.2).

My research finds that in a community-based process, social capital, in all three dimensions of bonding, bridging and linking, concurrently exist (see Fig. 8.1). Each social capital dimension is formed based on multiple levels of resources from the individual, community, network and state, which encapsulate nuances of trust, cooperation, social values and norms. The weight of each societal resource level varies across social capital dimensions, which is illustrated by the arrows moving around each societal level (see Fig. 8.2). The findings suggest social capital formation move

beyond the dichotomy between civil-society and state towards the consideration of various factors within each societal layer.

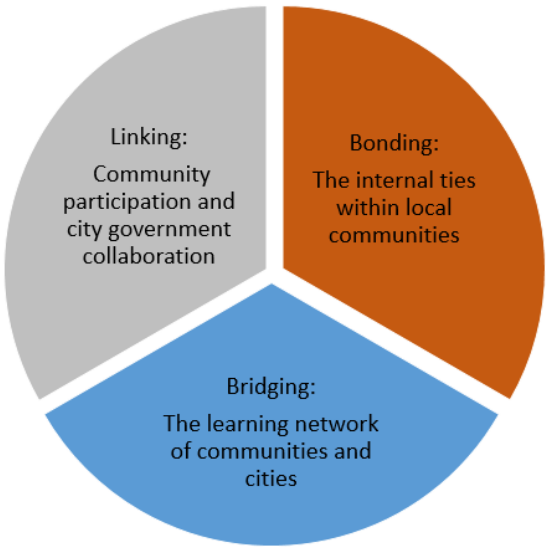

Figure 8.1: Social capital's dimensions in the studied community-based process (Original)

Figure 8.2: Social capital formation in the studied community-based process (Original)

8.2.1 The individual

The study suggests the formation of social capital depends on individual behaviours and attitudes, or behavioural or attitudinal norms (Hooghe & Stolle, 2003). These individual behavioural or attitudinal norms encapsulate, for example, individuals' behaviours in response to interest conflicts (see 5.3.1), the lack of self-confidence, over-spending habits and the governmental subsidy expectation (see 5.3.2), and the individuals' common goal or vision (a desire to change the housing condition (see 5.3.2)). These norms have been cited as essential forms of social capital in current literature (Woolcock & Narayan 2000; Kearns, 2003; Adger, 2003). They do not need to be seen as positive by wider society to serve as bonding norms within a sector of that society (e.g., the Mafia). Nonetheless, my study has identified personal attitudinal norms in both destructive (see 5.3.1 and 5.3.2) and constructive forms (see 5.4.2) which respectively counter and enable the formation of communities' internal ties. Among the destructive attitudinal norms, the lack of interpersonal trust possibly results from the lack of personal trustworthiness. Such a close relationship between trust and cooperation agrees with the literature describing shared norms of cooperation and psychological capacities to facilitate associations (Fukuyama, 1995; Glaeser et al., 2002; Farr, 2004). What seems to have been less discussed are personal attitudinal/behavioural issues (see 5.3.1 and 5.3.2) that feature individual factors that impede communities' cooperative ties. Together with the lack of personal trustworthiness, personal attitudinal/behavioural issues appear to result from the situation of deprived neighbourhoods, which implies the influence of local socio-economic contexts and a broader institutional environment, or the state, in shaping local social resources (see in section 8.2.4).

The findings show that social capital can be formed based on a set of individual characteristics, or personal qualities, that feature a leadership role that is trustworthy and beneficial to reinforce cooperation within and among bonded, bridged and linked groups (i.e., internal cooperative ties within local communities, exchange networks among communities and power connections between local communities and the government). Such a role is suggested by the results about a leader emerging from the community (see 5.4.4, and 6.4.4), the leader of the VNCDF network (see 6.3.5) and the community leader who comes from outside the community (see 7.3.3). These findings are in line with the ideas of Ostrom (2007) that the trustworthiness of trusted individuals often results from the characteristics of the individuals themselves. Among the examined characteristics, "personal interests" suggest a motivational condition for the leader's enthusiastic and effective role. Such a condition, however, needs to combine with other personal qualities (skills, knowledge and personality) for a member of the community to perform an active and trustworthy role, as per the

Friendship case study. The role played by an external person (section 7.3.3) suggests the possible influence of (an) external individual(s) in strengthening the bonding ties of a group.

of Findings about the individual characteristics suggest concepts of individual origins of social capital, or human capital, suggested by Bourdieu (1980, 1986) and Coleman (1988, 1990). The findings, however, move beyond Bourdieu's idea about the impacts individual social norms and attributes in personal development and rather follow Coleman to feature the impacts of individuals' capital on collective groups' endeavours. Particularly the finding on the role of leaders in strengthening community participation in the upgrading process supports ideas about the role of civic actions and human capital in laying a platform for local democracy (Cuthill, 2003; Culhill & Fien, 2005)

With respect to "community leaders", the study confirms a similar role, described by Bourdieu (1985, p. 739) as "a spokesperson", who receives from the group the power to "speak for it, on its behalf and in its place". The research results also support recent studies on the role of community project leaders as unifying or decisive forces that significantly influence linking relations between upgrading communities and external actors (Archer, 2010b; Natakun, 2013; Vilar & Cartes, 2016). The community project leader's role, in fact, has been described by Archer (2010b, p. 149-172) as the "information controller", or "the gate keeper". However, there are differences between this study and the previous ones. In previous studies, community project leaders are usually mandated from outside and have a patronage-client relationship with the communities. Some are reported to abuse their power or be corrupt (Nguyen, 2009, p.70; Archer, 2010b). These results were not found in this study. The "community linkers" of this study are not officially mandated but rather emerge from inside (i.e., the leader of Friendship) or outside the communities (i.e., the leader of Binh Dong 1) based on personal trustworthiness. The emergence of such roles tends to have a greater impact on strengthening communities' internal ties and connecting communities with power entities. The role of community leaders in enhancing the multi-dimensions of social capital, found in this study, agrees with observations about the leader's role in strengthening a community's effective participation by raising trust and maintaining ties within and beyond a community (Dale & Newman, 2010; Minnery et al., 2013). The research shows that a spokesperson's role can be performed by an external actor and still be legitimately empowering.

The above finding offers another way of looking at the role. The availability of such a role within a community might be defined by the underlying social cohesion of the community. In the case of Friendship, the community social cohesion originates from a typical pre Doi Moi context (see 5.4.3). Consequently, the research findings support the importance of the individual characteristics of a leader but, on the other hand, it can be argued that leadership is effective only because of the

preceding well-established sense of community (i.e., the social ties among the former factory workers in Friendship). That no such leader emerged in Binh Dong may be because of either a lack of someone in the community with those leadership attributes, or a lack of a sense of community that no such leader could arise. This study may be short in answering these questions but suggests an intriguing investigation: to further examine the concept of leadership based on individual characteristics versus that influenced by the community's underlying bonds or even a broader socio-political context. The findings may be exceptional in many countries, but might be more the norm in Vietnam.

8.2.2 The community

The study suggests social capital can be formed by the community's common concerns. These communal concerns feature local homogeneous internal linkages (i.e., the common desire to change the housing conditions, the common feeling about new houses, see 5.4.2 and 5.4.3) that, according to Bull & Jones (2006), might generate diversified resources, mutual help and the capacity to achieve complex tasks. Besides the common concerns to improve their housing conditions and a strong attachment to the new homes that resulted from their efforts, another factor that enabled the community's cohesive ties' formation related to the norm of neighbourhood attachment. This norm of neighbourhood attachment differed between the case studies, encapsulating interpersonal ties established through employment and neighbourhood establishment history (Friendship neighbourhood) and the feeling of attachment with the physical environment (place attachment) (Binh Dong 1). The socio-historical ties of Friendship and place attachment feelings of Binh Dong 1 might be explained by the research context. Friendship's ties originate from Vietnam's subsidized economy that, in the absence of material abundance, values collective ties, people's equal status and mutual help[89]. They also reflect bonds developed through people's working life[90]. Binh Dong 1's place attachment feelings feature an eastern culture that connects with "the other world"[91] (the connection between the people and the old-aged tomb). The findings support Putnam's (1993a) observation about the role of communities' social, historical and cultural factors in generating social capital. However, the findings in section 8.2.1, dispute Putnam's argument that "social capital is not the property of individuals or institutions but self-reinforces and accumulates from the spaces between them" (ibid, p. 38). The results, instead suggest social capital is formed by properties of

[89] These traditional connections, despite having gradually changed because of national economic reforms and globalization, have significantly influenced Vietnamese social life.
[90] Vietnamese traditionally tend to be strongly attached to their working organization throughout their life. Therefore, working relationships in many cases form a significant part of one's social bonds.
[91] For Vietnamese, this type of spiritual linkage appears to have significant meaning and influence in people's life (see Jellema, 2007).

both individuals (as discussed in 8.2.1) and the spaces between them (i.e., the established interpersonal bonds, and the gathering of individuals' feelings).

The neighbourhood attachment ties, as discussed above, suggest the notion of "bonding" that was not examined in the literature review chapter. This notion of bonding, according to Riger & Lavrakas (1981), is categorized into social bonding and place bonding. This supplements the concept of "neighbourhood attachment" examined by Dekker (2007), which highlights the social significance of people living in the same place, or "spatial-emotional attachment", created by a symbolic value of the place, also known as place identity. The study's findings, therefore, contribute another aspect of neighbourhood attachment with the notion of the historical and social value of the place in addition to a symbolic physical factor (i.e., the establishment of the co-workers' residential area of Friendship). Though social bonding ties refer to interpersonal ties that have a long tradition in social capital literature (Putnam, 1993a, b; Schuller et al., 2000, Kearns, 2003), place bonding ties have relatively recently been discussed. According to Manzo & Perkins (2006), literature on place attachment has not placed individuals' feelings about the physical environment around them in a larger, socio-political context in which planners operate. Conversely, the community planning literature "overlooks emotional connections to place when dealing with participation and empowerment" (ibid, p. 335). To address this gap, Mihaylov & Perkins (2013) explored neighbourhood attachment norms as a form of bonding ties that capitalize on mutual values, social connections and shared concerns to enable neighbourhood-level action and cooperation. In the same way, this study, while preliminary, has addressed the gap by providing insights into the role of a place based sense of community in forming communities' bonding ties to nurture collective efforts.

Another factor of a community level, which influences the collective participation of the community, relates to Binh Dong 1's scepticism about the city government's project (see 7.2.3) as a result of the internal conditions. In the literature, such a norm of mistrust is normally explained as the inability of local authorities to act on behalf of the people (see Temkin & Rohe, 1998; Kearns, 2003). However, as the results did not identify any past negative experiences with the government of Binh Dong 1, and a similar perception of mistrust is not found in Friendship, Binh Dong 1's mistrust seems to relate to its deprived socio-economic conditions. If this is so, local communities' internal problems seem to not only lead to a lack of internal trust, but also affect their trust in external actors.

Overall, the findings suggest the role of social capital at a community level includes a sense of community (i.e., local communities' social bonding ties, place attachment, communities' trust in external actors, team bonding).

8.2.3 The network

The study finds that social capital for a community-based initiative is also formed by resources at a network level that feature different nuances of trust including the norms of legitimacy and empowerment.

The attempt to strengthen the membership and operation of the VNCDF network by engaging with a legitimate actor, ACVN – an association of city government (see 6.2.1 and 6.2.2), suggests a norm of trust at an organizational level. This result confirms previous studies asserting trust as "sin qua non" of bridging relations (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000; Füzer & Monostori, 2012, p. 61). What makes this finding notable is the type of hybrid organizational legitimacy that necessitates both civic attributes (i.e., the voluntary and non- governmental nature of ACVN) and state factors (ACVN's governmental membership). A possible assumption is that such a hybrid status is necessary for the network to engage with the power on the government side and promote civic actions on the non-government side. This finding, therefore, provides a concept of organizational trust from a local governance perspective, which features the mixed benefits of the state and the civil-society. It, at the same time, accents the essence of a transitioning context where a favourable framework for civil society's fruition is not in place.

The ACCA approach's principles to mobilize the communities' collective and internal resources (see 5.4.1), engages with local communities in the learning network (see 6.4) and facilitates community participation in the partnership with local government (see 7.2.1) introducing the norm of community empowerment. This norm of empowerment enables urban poor communities to be believed (by the network organizers), and to take an active role in promoting their internal ties, learning networks and actions to connect with the local government. In this way, communities' bonding, bridging and linking ties are formed; they become the "key doer" through facilitative roles of external experts in providing support, technical assistance and using participatory planning techniques. Such a norm of an empowerment function as a trust building norm differs from the norm of legitimacy examined in the section above. Though building network legitimacy functions as a prerequisite condition for social capital formation (the initial condition to invite potential members to enrol in the network), trust building, based on the active engagement of the "bonded, bridged and linked groups", seems to be an essential condition for social capital formation (the operational mechanism to guide the members' activities in the network). Such a social capital formation mechanism acts as an empowering tool by defining the roles (the active role of communities and the facilitative role of external experts) and techniques (participatory techniques). Trust relations, therefore, appear to identify the norms of stakeholders' roles and techniques. The finding on

participatory techniques (see 7.2.1), though preliminarily reported, allude to the impacts of technical factors in facilitating social relations. This finding supports the observation by Archer (2010b, p. 218) about a similar approach applied in a Thai community-based upgrading programme that attempted to build the urban poor's capacity to "define their own development and help themselves". Such similar findings across distinguishable national contexts between Vietnam and Thailand, suggest the potential resources that commonly exist within local communities of any socio-political condition; they can be named, as suggested by Mitlin & Satterthwaite (2012, p. 397) as "evident energy, resourcefulness and motivation".

The study, at the same time, draws attention to the role of the communities' wider networks, or the voluntary associations' roles in empowering the communities to take an active role in connecting with power. The norms followed by such entities, if following Ostrom (2007), are considered institutional rules to enable individuals to govern themselves by providing information, technical advice and alternative conflict-resolution mechanisms (e.g., using the role of community leaders and facilitating the community's internal discussions). Particularly, the finding supports the observation of Paxton (2002, p. 257) about the importance of strong civic associations in "promoting political participation and training community and local government leaders of both undemocratic and democratic societies". Particularly in the area of urban housing and development, the formation of social capital based on a network's norm of empowerment, as in my study, supports the literature on the role of civil society networks in strengthening social capital via communities' self-help housing initiatives studied in other contexts. For example, D'Cruz & Mudimu (2013) report the role of the Slum Dwellers International (SDI) operated in various countries, such as India, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Uganda and Bolivia, in strengthening internal ties within urban poor communities, mobilizing them to work together and negotiate with government. A study by Sengupta & Sharma (2012, p. 239), concludes that the role of the Nepali Kirtipur Housing Project is in generating social capital that enables urban poor communities to "transform their material conditions". That such a similar role of a civic network is found in the context of my study – a socialist communist and one-party-controlled nation – suggests critical impacts of civil society networks in the generation of social capital for urban poor communities in a wide range of socio-political contexts.

The results on the cohesive ties among members of VNCDF management team (see 6.3) suggest a type of bonding ties of a mandate based group (network) that are different from the bonding ties of a geographically and administratively defined group (local community). The themes explored (e.g., the team members' long-term relationships, mutual understanding, team work, shared values and a trusted network leader) feature both personal attitudes and interpersonal behaviours. The "long-

term relationship" and "mutual understanding" feature interpersonal relations, the social ties that seemingly have established overtime; "team work" features cooperative ties that possibly draw on the shared values and trusted network leader. The "shared values" (section 6.3.4) feature a "common emotional space" that is created by individual feelings (belief) commonly existing within the group, which is similar to the communities' "common emotional space" examined in the section above: the community.

The existing strong cohesive ties among the project team members appear to generate interpersonal trust, which, as suggested by Ostrom (2007), creates an informal form of governance and the feeling of responsibility among the members. Possibly, such a form of governance influences the way the team members cooperate by not only helping each other (section 6.3.3), but also understanding each other's weaknesses and strengths (section 6.3.2). This implies notions of "tolerance" and "adaptation", with which members of the collective compromise and adjust their behaviours to mobilize individuals' strengths and minimize their weaknesses to achieve the common goal. Seemingly, there is a third community at a network level, acting as a bridge between the two communities of the case studies. Such other community within the network possesses many of the features that might ordinarily be characterised as simply 'team bonding' that accentuates a type of "uniting mandate and purpose", as opposed to the place-based attachment found in the case studies' upgrading communities. Such bonding social capital formed within that network is important because it means that people in the network go beyond the normal expectations of their employment and perform their roles based on cohesive values and ties, thereby leading to the successful performance of the network.

Overall, social capital at a network level, based on the study's findings, encapsulates distinguishable norms of trust: the norm of legitimacy, norm of empowerment and the norm of interpersonal trust within the bonded network management team. The norm of legitimacy can be understood as a prerequisite condition to enable the social relations to establish. The norm of empowerment is an essential condition to enable the authentic community space in which the community plays its active and trusted role in sharing local knowledge and learning to take charge of its own development. The norm of interpersonal trust within the bonded network management team functions as an enabling condition that contributes to the operation of the network.

8.2.4 The State

The study's results suggest that bonding, bridging and linking relationships are formed based on resources at the state level. For example, sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 suggest the internal conflicts of

both communities as being the remnants of urban land management policies. Particularly, the lack of interpersonal trust and cooperation in one case study - the more deprived community (Binh Dong 1) – is reported as originating from local socio-economic problems. In the literature, the connection between neighbourhood socio-economic problems and a lack of trust has been frequently observed (Decker, 2007; Ostrom, 2007; Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones, 2002). Local socio-economic problems of poor communities (i.e. social evils, debt, unclear origins, unemployment, etc.) are considered as barriers that hamper the trustworthiness of residents, resulting in a lack of interpersonal trust. The lack of interpersonal trust is seen as the lack of a community level bonding capital that enables communities' collective efforts to find the way out of struggles. These features were characteristics of the Binh Dong Project. This finding questions the existence of trustworthiness within communities of common characteristics that lubricate social life and reinforce norms of generalized reciprocity (Putnam, 1993; Kearns, 2003). Where such a feature may be lacking, Coleman (1988) argues for a positive approach to forming social structures based on strengthening social relationships, mutual trust and information exchange.

My study highlights the state's role in addressing local socio-economic problems to augment trustworthiness among community members. This has parallels in the work of Giaccaria (2009) and Cannone (2009). The finding seems contrary to the views of Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones (2002) that, in the absence of other assets, poor communities tend to rely on their relationships, associations and networks[92] to survive on a day-to-day basis. The results do not support the observation by Sengupta & Sharma (2012) on the vital role of inter-household and inter-family networks in maintaining reciprocal exchange and mobilizing collective efforts to manage their conditions. Consequently, the similar housing difficulties of poor communities might not always act as vital resources for them to work together, as previously claimed (Putnam, 1993; Ha, 2010; Sengupta & Sharma, 2012). This study, instead, supports the literature on participation identifying low socio-economic status as the cause of people's less-well developed interpersonal skills and fewer social interactions (Verba & Nie, 1972; Dekker, 2007). It is equally in line with the suggestion to improve urban governance and institutional arrangements as a useful and "long-termed strategy to maintain and improve community capital" (Minnery et al, 2013, p.168). This has significant implications for practical interventions targeting informal settlements where conflicts resulting from controversial or unclear legal boundaries related to property rights or land tenure may be abundant.

[92] For example, sharing and reciprocating labour, cash, food, information, friendship and moral support sources upon which poor people can draw (see also Chapter 5) (Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones, 2002).

The impacts of local institutional frameworks on communities' internal ties are important (e.g., the communal land title to maintain community social ties that have been established over time (see Section 5.5.4)). Concerns about land tenure have been observed by Archer (2010b) in relation to the wary feeling of Thai upgraded slum residents about tenure security and the eviction battle. However, whereas Archer's observation refers to the relationship between the slum communities and external actors, the current study points out the impact of different types of land title on communities' internal structure. According to the evidence, if an individual land title is delivered, it may potentially change the community structure because of freehold land use right transactions. This possibly explains the existence of Friendship's social ties as being sustained by the current public land title. If Friendship residents had individual title they could have sold their land use right or got loans from the bank to renovate the houses, hence they would not have had to work together. The study's finding, in general, suggests value in using local regulations as a binding mechanism to maintain communities' social ties. However, the use of such a binding mechanism might hinder the generation of other types of capital (i.e., financial capital) because, as in an example from the data, the residents are not able to deposit a land use right to obtain a bank loan because of the common land title.

The national and local legal framework (e.g., city development plans) are also important in the implementation of the upgrading projects (see Sections 6.2 and 7.3.1). Section 6.2 draws attention to building network legitimacy that is defined by the legal environment in which the network operates. Section 7.3.1 shows that both case studies were implemented in part because the upgrading projects met goals identified in their cities' local development plans, which had been formulated in response to central government's national development strategy[93]. That such urban development was necessary, both reflected a clear need (Un-Habitat, 2014, p. 50) and met the vision of modern, beautiful cities (Garschagen, 2010). Whereas, the need is to solve the problems created by national economic reforms that left behind the remnants of unmanaged public housing areas (Friendship case) and uncontrolled migration leading to illegal squatters (Binh Dong 1), the vision of modern beautiful cities seems to follow the national urban ranking system explained in Chapter 4. Institutional mandate and the lack of alternatives means that cities collaborated to implement ACCA housing projects, which seemingly set the foundation for the governments' eventual provision of functional support to implement the project. The finding, therefore, indicates a State–based motivation for the collaborative from "the above" (the government), which implies the weakness of the State institutions, as suggested by Bhuiyan (2010).

[93] National Orientation Master Plan for the Development of Vietnam's Urban Centre till 2020

8.2.5 Social capital formation: beyond the dichotomy between civil-society and state

The discussion above shows that in the two case studies, and perhaps to enable the approach to be used in other parts of Vietnam, social capital formation for a community based initiative needs to be sufficiently flexible to incorporate the conditions and characteristics of actors working at different levels in the political structure. The finding draws attention to a holistic approach to social capital formation. Such a holistic approach of social capital formation, particularly in the local governance arena, might support a combined approach that mobilizes resources from both the civil-society and the state. The findings show a significant role of civic activism in enabling citizens' participation, observed by Tocqueville (1889), or beneficial effects of social associations for members examined by Coleman (1988). The role of civic factors (i.e., individuals, communities and networks, see 8.2.1, 8.2.2, 8.2.3) showing civic origins agree with Putnam's (1993a, 1993b, 1995) ideas on the two-folded effects of civic associations: the internal effects on individual members' skill acquisition in a participatory democracy and the external effects on the political system. These insights support the ideas that state agencies should not be neglected and that social capital flourishes only if it is embedded in and linked to formal political and legal institutions (see, for instance, Lowndes & Wilson, 2001; Cannone, 2009). The synergy of factors from both the civil-society and state in social capital formation is clearly illustrated in the hybrid nature of the network (VNCDF), which is comparable to that evaluated by (Woolcock & Narayan (2000), and similarly to the findings of Maloney et al. (2000) and Bull & Jones (2006). Noticeably, because these previous studies' findings were based on developed and capitalist contexts (i.e., Italian and English cities) that are different from this research's context (i.e., cities in a socialist and communist transitioning state), this study's findings seemingly confirm the generalization of such a combined approach across different socio-political contexts. On the other hand, the formation of social capital based on non-human factors (i.e., individuals' feelings of place attachment, the role of neighbourhood physical settings, the participatory techniques) suggests a social capital formation approach that moves beyond the traditional dichotomy between the civil-society and state, towards an approach that necessarily takes account of heterogeneous factors emerging from the studied context.

8.3 Social capital mobilization

Aside from the formation of bonding, bridging and linking capital, the study suggests how these formed social capitals are mobilized to enable a collective community-based process. The findings show that a collective process relies on the independent existence of bonding, bridging and linking capitals. In addition, the mobilization of social capital needs to be adaptable, meaning that the lack

of a certain resource can be overcome by relying on the availability of another one. Figure 8.2 illustrates the characteristics of social capital mobilization.

8.3.1 Social capital mobilization is interdependent

The study's findings suggest bonding, bridging and linking capitals are spontaneous because the social resources of different levels (i.e., the individual, community, network and state) are interdependently mobilized to strengthen the relations within and among bonded, bridged and linked groups. This statement also means that the mobilization of social resources for each social capital dimension (i.e., bonding, bridging and linking) likely leads to the enhancement of the other two social capital dimensions. That bonding relations (e.g., communities' internal ties) are strengthened, benefits bridging relations (e.g., participation of communities in a learning network, see 6.4.5) and linking relations (i.e., the relationship between communities and local governments, see 7.2.2 and 7.2.3).

In turn, bridging relations (i.e., the operation of the VNCDF learning network) enables bonding relations (i.e., strengthening internal ties of communities, see 5.4.3) and linking relations (i.e., empowering community participation, see 7.2.2). This finding seemingly challenges the idea that civic associations most tangibly manifest bridging relations (Füzer & Monostori, 2012). It, instead, suggests a role for civic associations in influencing not only bridging relations (i.e., the horizontal learning network examined in the case studies), but also bonding relations (i.e., the communities' internal ties) and linking relations (i.e., the power connections between local communities and the government). In addition, in considering the cohesive ties of the VNCDF management team (see 6.3) and the engagement with both local government and local communities (see 6.4.1), the boundaries between bonding, bridging and linking capital become somewhat blurred because the effectiveness of the network (normally understood as a bridging entity) depends on its own bonding and linking capital.

Strengthening linking relations (i.e., the collaboration of local government, supportive legal framework, etc.) equally benefits bonding and bridging relations. The discussion on the role of the state in forming social capital (section 8.2.4) provides insights into this point. The active role of communities and the facilitative role of experts, as reported in 7.2.1, appear to influence not only communities' relationships with local government but also their internal ties and bridging relations. This supports the observation by Dale & Newman (2010) that linking ties resulting from the formation of networks crucially enable communities to access more diverse kinds of social capital; this finding hence suggests the interdependence of the social capital dimensions. Another specific

example from the study's results may be the impact of the government's formalization of Binh Dong 1 neighbourhood that seemingly provided a kind of individual human capital that would boost the people's social status and resources for their own development – the type of social capital recognized by Bourdieu (1980, 1986) and Coleman (1988). The study, therefore, suggests the interdependence and simultaneity of bonding, bridging and linking relations. Recognizably, in the case studies, the three dimensions of bonding, bridging and linking social capital are illustrated in communities' internal cooperative ties, the learning network of communities and city government, and the relationship between communities and local government, respectively. The co-existence of these relations in a community-based upgrading process is similarly found in the approach argued for by Woolcock & Narayan (2000) to shift development beyond bonding capital towards bridging and linking capital. The study also shows that bridging and linking relations help communities to overcome the limitations of bonding ties that, according to Mihaylov & Perkins (2013), may inhibit dealing with conflict or controversial issues. The findings, therefore, equally support the ideas of empowerment, e.g., as recommended by Vilar & Cartes (2016) to empower marginalized communities where bridging and linking networks are usually non-existent.

8.3.2 Social capital mobilization is adaptable

The adaptable mobilization of social capital is suggested by the results showing that the lack of a trusted internal leader can be replaced by an external leader – the project mediator (see 5.4 and 7.2). Similarly, the adaptable mobilization of social capital is reflected in the functioning of different types of community social capital (i.e., either social bonding ties or place attachment ties); network social capital (i.e., the distinguishable level of intervention in each case); state social capital (i.e., different types of support, local regulations). The differences in the actions taken to follow the upgrading approach in the two communities studied (section 5.4.1), resulting from the distinguishable internal conditions of each case study suggest that external intervention to mobilize social capital is defined by the internal conditions of poor communities. Consequently, the mobilization of social capital for collective initiatives adapts across different types of communities ranging from a highly marginalised community (e.g., Binh Dong 1 illegal squatters) to a more recognized community with underlying social ties, higher socio-economic conditions and a legal status of land use rights (i.e., Friendship). Such adaptability, however, results in a different flow of social capital or the degree of participation among these types of communities. For example, based on sections 7.2.2 and 7.2.3, Friendship features a more represented participation process whereas Binh Dong 1 reports the direct participation of all families and shared roles among the residents. Seemingly, the lack of an internal leading role in Binh Dong 1 led to the direct engagement of all community members in the project, hence simultaneously allowing its stronger interactions and

mutual understanding. The finding, thereby, suggests that different leader positions influence the flow of social capital in different ways.

In addition, the adaptable mobilization of social capital is suggested by the results on the role of "community leaders", the communities' cohesive efforts or the intervention of VNCDF in the flexible implementation of local planning issues (see section 7.3.2). Although this finding may imply a state based capital requiring local government responsiveness (i.e., the preparedness of local government to respond positively to the community's lobbying efforts), it implies the inadequacy of existing local regulations. Because of such inadequacy, the state, as in the Friendship case study, has to rely on retaining social capital norms of a pre-communist, pre Doi Moi society in order to address local issues. Particularly, the Friendship leader's use of national history as part of his rhetoric to lobby for the government's policy flexibility suggests a role for national history - a form of macro level social capital, examined in Putnam (1993a), in linking mechanisms. In this case, the state-based social capital is not the institutional legal framework but rather a social norm that originates from the country's socio-historical conditions.

The adaptability of social capital investment seems to reflect the main objective of the examined ACCA upgrading approach as asserted by Mitlin & Satterthwaite (2012, p. 397), "promoting community's autonomous power to mainstream the energy, resourcefulness and motivation evident in the residents of most informal settlements". Possibly social capital investment in the context of local governance issues is adaptable depending on the pivotal forces emerging from local conditions. Based on the case studies, these local forces can include local structural issues, the existence of rooted social bonds, and the available set of personal characteristics that can lead to an effective leadership role. The adaptability of social capital investment mechanisms based on local situations may allow the citizens to raise mutual trust, cooperation, share needs and concerns, and even actively "negotiate through bureaucratic layers and procedures in pursuit of improvements" (Minnery et al., 2013, p.167). This way of engaging local resources in local initiatives, as suggested by Galuszka (2014), might serve as a local governance tool and affect "the modes of governance in Asia" (Galuszka, 2014, p. 20).

8.3.3 Social capital maintenance is difficult to predict

The study shows that social capital needs to be maintained because conditions that enable the formation of social capital are unstable. The longevity of social capital, therefore, is uncertain or unpredictable. This statement is informed by results of section 5.5.4 featuring a temporary motivational force for people's interaction to achieve a shared goal – a form of community

emotional space – gathering from common individual feelings (i.e., the common desire to change and the feeling about the physical environment). Because individuals seem to choose to cooperate because of their goals, the generation of common individuals' feelings might not serve as a long term social capital enabling mechanism. This implication might be applicable for interpreting the results of section 5.5.4 regarding a change in the relationship between some residents and the project leader in Friendship. The completion of the upgrading changes the context and may have opened the path for a gradual loss of trust in the community project leader and the reassertion of older bonding relationships. The extent to which the capital built during the upgrade will be maintained in the future is difficult to gauge based on the limited time covered by this study. There were only a few (three) indications of discontent and this may be a temporary issue in Friendship. This finding, though preliminary, suggests a contextual and relational nature of trust and cooperation that might explain the results of section 5.5.4 regarding the return of social internal problems in Binh Dong 1. The lower starting level of social capital means a more rapid and widespread loss of social cohesion at the end of the upgrading project in Binh Dong 1. These findings support the ideas of Blokland & Savage (2008) on the non-stable characteristic of trust that reflects individuals' contextual and relational attitudes.

The finding suggests a temporariness of the network's legitimate status because of the network's uncertain capacity (see 6.2.3); the result, therefore, necessitates network legitimacy maintenance by building network capacity. Looked at from the outside, such a trust building and maintaining mechanism could also be understood as a social capital investment mechanism by building the capacity of the organization that has a role in generating social capital. This implication supports previous observations (e.g., Nyamori et al., 2012) that emphasize the importance of an organization's internal structures (including institutional coherence, capacity, credibility, and competency) in fostering social capital. These factors described in previous studies as institutional capital that encapsulates collective values, knowledge and relationships existing within any organized group in society (see, for instance, Evans et al., 2006). The results also align with and support other research findings (e.g., Varol et al., 2011; Lewandowski, 2012; Muchadenyika, 2015) from the wider Asia region that urge a strengthening capacity for civic associations to foster community participation and social inclusion.

The uncertainty of the legal framework (i.e., the weakness of the existing legal framework, the reliance on a long-standing national social norms and the issuance of new policies that challenge the continuation of a similar community based upgrading process) (see 7.3.4) suggests the unpredictability of conditions that enable social capital generation through a community-based

process. The tendency is that the state continuously consolidate its legal framework to guide social behaviours, which likely narrow the space for social norms to operate. Putting the study in the transitioning context of Vietnam from a centralized into a more liberal capitalist system, the study's finding supports the notion of "institutional uncertainty" used by Zhu (2012, p.6) to describe Vietnamese institutional change. According to Zhu, the order is that structure social interactions are considered as institutions, or "rules of the game". Institutional uncertainty is created when "the institutions of the status quo are weakened and new institutions are yet to be established" (Zhu, 2012, pp. 5-6). This situation, to Zhu, results in the "absence of a predictable and transparent environment that is essential for social and economic activities" (Zhu, 2012, p. 6).

The above findings are contrary to Putnam's (1993b, p. 4) suggestion that "successful collaboration and trust on one issue tend to facilitate further collaboration on other issues". Rather, they match the idea that the construction of durable networks of institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintances are through investment strategies (Bourdieu, 1986; Cannone, 2009; Dale & Newman; 2010). This study, therefor, signifies a need to maintain social capital enabling conditions, described by Lin (1999, p. 4) to be a "continuous process of reinforcement to maintain the efficacy of social trust and cooperation relationship". These findings necessitate maintenance strategies for social relations and might be relevant for the future practice of community-based upgrades.

8.4 A holistic conceptual framework of social capital formation, mobilization and maintenance

The above discussion leads to the study's central finding: a holistic conceptual framework of social capital formation, mobilization and maintenance. Figure 8.1, inspired by theoretical viewpoints reviewed in Chapter 2 and the evidence from the case studies, illustrates the three dimensions of social capital: bonding, bridging and linking relations. Figure 8.2 illustrates four levels of societal resources: the individual, community, network and state existing in the social capital circle. The weight (the role and influence) of each resource level varies from one social capital dimension to others, and based on contextual condition. Figure 8.3 builds on figure 8.1 and 8.2, illustrating a holistic approach of social capital formation, mobilization and maintenance. The figure shows the process of forming, mobilizing and maintaining social capital, or put differently, the three social capital dimensions: bonding, bridging and linking. The first circle shows that social capital is formed based on four levels of societal resources: the individual, community, network and state. The second circle, with arrows moving around each societal resource level, illustrates the adaptable mobilization of social capital. The two headed arrows moving around bonding, bridging and linking capitals shows the interdependence among bonding, bridging and linking relations. The third circle, with all

components in lighter colour, shows that social-capital-forming resources at four levels are changeable and conditional. They can fade away, therefore, the maintenance of social capital is difficult to predict.

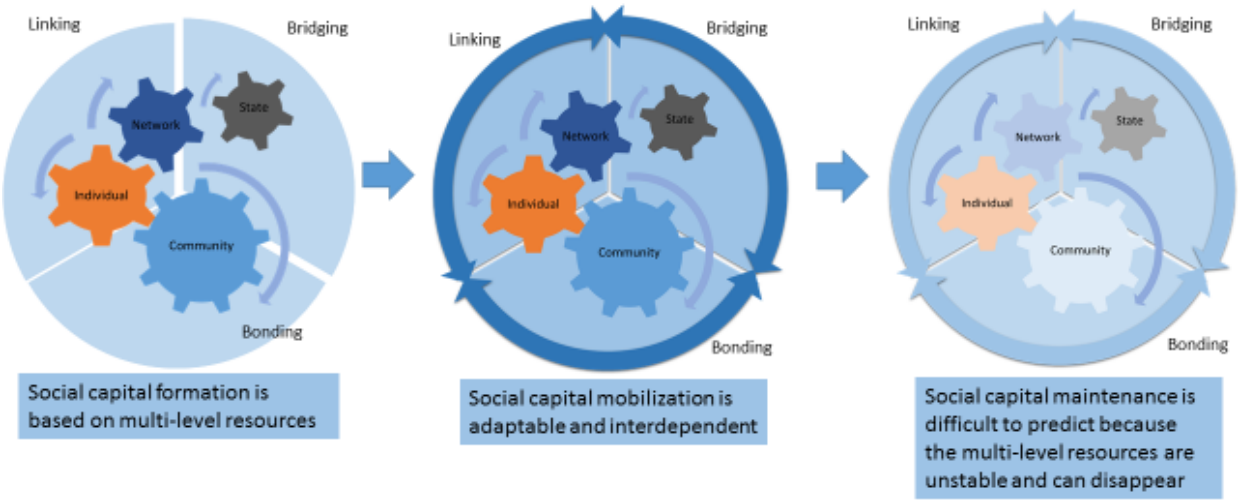

Figure 8.3: Social capital formation, mobilization and maintenance in a community-based process (Original)

8.5 Summary and conclusion

In summary, this chapter discusses the formation, mobilization and maintenance of bonding, bridging and linking capitals, which essentially feature four levels of resources: the individual, community, network and the state. The study's findings show that individual social capital encapsulates individual behaviours and attitudes, and individual characteristics or qualities. Particularly, the findings about individual characteristics feature the role of leaders that significantly influences the flow of all three social capital dimensions. Community social capital is explored and found to feature both interpersonal and individual feelings that commonly exist in a community, featuring the senses of the community based on heterogeneous local conditions including social, historical, cultural, and place-based factors. The chapter also discusses the influence of social capital on the wider communities' networks in bonding, bridging and linking relations, which encapsulate the networks' norms of legitimacy and empowerment. The state also plays a vital role in all dimensions of social capital, which highlights the influence of the legal framework and institutional mandate in the operation of communities' internal ties, the operation of civic networks and the collaboration between local communities and government. Besides featuring the specific nuances of each social capital level, the chapter examines a social capital formation approach that moves beyond the dichotomy of civil society (social) and the state (institutional) by taking account of heterogeneous factors including, among others, the role of non-human factors (physical

environment, techniques). In addition, the chapter discusses interdependent and adaptable mobilization; and the unpredictable maintenance of social capital. The points discussed in the chapter are summarized in a social capital conceptual framework for community based initiatives, as illustrated in Figure 8.1.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

9.1 Research review: research process, main findings and limitations

The research process started from an assumption that social capital can be used to facilitate solutions to complex local governance problems; this study set out with the general intention to critically examine how social capital operates in a local collective, community based initiative, urban housing upgrading in Vietnam. To achieve this, three objectives were set:

1. To explore how social capital is formed in a community based housing upgrading process by identifying the levels, components and formation approach of social resources within each dimension of bonding, bridging and linking relations.

2. To explore how social capital is mobilized or used in a community based housing upgrading process by identifying the role and influence of social resources within each dimension of bonding, bridging and linking relations.

3. To explore how social capital is maintained in a community based housing upgrading process by identifying the conditions under which social resources maintain within each dimension of bonding, bridging and linking relations.

Through meeting these objectives, the study sought a response to questions regarding how bonding, bridging and linking relationships are formed, mobilized and maintained and how the relationships between the three social capitals affect their formation, mobilization and maintenance. In doing so, the study also sought to confirm the utility of using such concepts in the socio-political context of Vietnam, which can be characterised since Doi Moi as transitioning from a centralised to a market-based economy. Two qualitative case studies were conducted; they involved 52 interviews, direct and participant observation and documentary analysis over a period of 4 months' field work in Hanoi (the headquarter office of VNCDF network) and the two housing projects' sites. The case studies were two Vietnamese ACCA housing projects in neighbourhoods of Vinh and Tan An, in the northern and southern parts of Vietnam, respectively. The two communities were chosen for the study because of their distinguishable social histories and housing situations providing valuable spaces for considering the role of social capital in urban upgrading. One neighbourhood had a history of a single employer whereas the other was an illegal canal squatter community with little positive social capital at the outset of the project.

The research's main findings showed how social capital was formed and mobilised in each community and identified the issue of maintenance. In the process, the study's results demonstrate that a framework drawing on concepts embedded in social capital theories can be fruitfully applied within the Vietnamese context, at least for the analysis of urban upgrading. The more exploratory aspects of the study's findings shed light on the operation of bonding, bridging and linking capital in a community-based process and address the study's specific objectives by providing insights into how social capital is formed, mobilized and maintained.

The study suggests a holistic approach to the formation of cooperative relations within and between bonded, bridged and linked groups in a community based process. Such a holistic social capital formation approach necessarily incorporates resources of different societal levels into the political structure (individual, community, network and state), featuring specific aspects of social capital components such as trust, cooperation, behavioural attitudes and norms in each level. Each level can be seen as a societal resource. Among these different levels of societal resource, in the Vietnamese context, the 'network' is of particular importance for its influence in generating (or forming) multi-dimensions of social capital (not only bridging, but also bonding and linking relations). Such a critical role of the network is featured by different nuances of trust: interpersonal trust, organizational trust and the norm of community empowerment. This finding, based as it is on the transitioning context of Vietnam, might be relevant to other countries with similar histories and conditions. In addition, the essential roles of the other societal levels (i.e., the individual, community and state) indicate a social capital formation approach that, even for a centralized transitioning socio-political context like Vietnam, moves beyond the dominating influence of the state and involves both the civil-society and the state, as has been examined in democratic contexts.

The mobilization of bonding, bridging and linking capital is suggested by the study to be interdependent and adaptable. Social capital mobilization for a community-based process is interdependent because the social resources of different levels (i.e., the individual, community, network and state) are simultaneously mobilized to strengthen the relations within and among bonded, bridged and linked groups. The mobilization of social resources in one social dimension among bonding, bridging and linking relationships enables the enhancement of the other two. Social capital mobilization is also adaptable because social resources mobilized for the collective outcome of the two studied community based processes were not identical. The lack of a social capital enabling condition in one case can be replaced by another one where it is available and beneficial for enhancing social ties. Such an adaptability of social capital mobilization might be defined by the nature of the community-based process that is introduced by the network as mentioned above.

With respect to the maintenance of social capital, the study suggests that this is unpredictable because conditions enabling social capital to form, or generate, are uncertain, being both conditional and unstable. The unstable nature of social capital enabling conditions is found at all levels of societal resources (i.e., the individual trustworthiness, community's cohesion, network capacity and the state's collaboration). Therefore, the study suggests that there is a need for strategies to maintain the efficacy of social capital enabling conditions and to cope with their unpredictability.

There are limitations in my study. The first limitation relates to the lack of more in-depth insights into the impacts of macro-scales (i.e., the nation and region) in the operation (i.e., formation, mobilization and maintenance) of the social capital of the case studies. This limitation resulted from the study's limited resources in terms of time and budget; this led to a lack of insights into whether bonding relations at the state level play a role in the formation of the social capital of a community-based process. Similarly, the research could not capture information on whether resources at a regional level may form another societal level in the developed conceptual framework.

The study's second limitation is a lack of data about the case studies because of time constraints. For example, negative aspects expressed about the two neighbourhoods' internal relationships in the post project stage were captured only in a small number of interviews. This may be partly because people were more excited to share their positive views on the project process and partly because of local culture that does not encourage people to share their thoughts frankly. It may be that these views were felt by only a very small number of people.

The limited time frame of the study did not allow a more thorough exploration of the continuation of the ACCA housing projects and the VNCDF network in Vietnam. Therefore, the cases' post project concerns were not prominent in the interviews and were observed only during the short time of the fieldtrip, which may mean the study is biased regarding implications for the maintenance of social capital. A longitudinal study would be valuable to address this concern. In the same way, although one of the study's findings relates to the role of heterogeneous factors in the operation of social capital (i.e., human and non-human actors - the place, the house, the neighbourhood setting; societal and institutional), there might be other more relevant information (e.g., the complexity of communities in terms of gender, education, ages) that was missed.

The third limitation relates to the number of case studies. Because of the limited number of available ACCA housing projects in Vietnam that met the case selection criteria, the study could involve only two case studies, which limits the ability to generalise confidently from the results.

However, in considering the research's exploratory objectives, this limitation can be seen as largely unavoidable and invites further studies as suitable cases become available.

9.2 Research contribution: social capital theory, practical policies and future research

As discussed in Chapter 2, social capital theory discussion has been based on multiple aspects categorized as social capital levels and components; formation approaches; and dimensions of bonding, bridging and linking relations; yet, there remains much debate about where social capital is generated and how the three dimensions of social capital flow together. A framework that enables synergies among the different perspectives seems to be still needed. Another problem is that current knowledge has a lack of a specific meaning of the social capital components in a given context, particularly regarding the operation of civil-society networks in the context of local governance. In contributing to the theoretical body of knowledge, the proposed framework allows a synergized understanding of, at least from the perspective of a community based initiative, specific social capital components (e.g., trust, cooperation, other behavioural norms), levels (i.e., individuals, communities, network, state) and formation approach (civil society or state-centred approach) that operate within the three dimensions of social relationships. This conceptual framework provides insightful, contextual understanding of the internal operation of the social capital components. Among the key social capital components, the study contributes distinguishable nuances of trust at each societal level, including personal trustworthiness, interpersonal trust, community trust, organizational legitimacy, and the norms of community empowerment. In addition, the study moves beyond the dominating discussions on the correlation between trust and cooperation and suggests the impacts of other social norms in social capital generation. These include, for instance, behavioural attitudes (i.e., individuals' feelings), place-based norms, and long standing socio-cultural values. Particularly, the study sheds light on the influence of non-human factors (physical factors such as the house, the spiritual symbol, the living space), and individuals' emotional feelings that imply an intangible inner-self emotion motivating individuals to cooperate with each other.

The study's developed conceptual framework suggests the theories of social capital formation should move beyond the combination of civil-society and state factors towards a more holistic approach that encapsulates heterogeneous factors in terms of institutional, social, organizational, economic, historical and cultural origins. Particularly, the study draws attention to the role of non-human factors such as place, the techniques, and the neighbourhood lay out. The interdependence of bonding, bridging and linking dimensions and the integration of the different levels of societal resources within each dimension suggest a mixture of social capital dimensions. The study,

therefore, calls for reconsideration of the categorization of bonding, bridging, and linking capitals. Noting that the use of these three categories has been helpful in this study, this call for reconsideration is necessary and is supported by the study's insights into the need for a holistic, adaptable approach that is essential to gauge the complexity of a community based process, particularly in a transitioning context.

Second, my research contributes to practice by providing insights into the emerging ACCA community-based upgrading initiative in Asia. The role of a hybrid network (e.g., the VNCDF) is important to enable the "coming into life" of such an initiative in the transitioning context of Vietnam; but the realization that this initiative depends on the actual context of local government and communities. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution. My study findings, therefore, provide examples of approaches and ways to conceptualise the formation and mobilisation of social capital that may aid development agencies and policy makers to formulate suitable strategies that incorporate the complexity of communities within a comprehensive framework. Such strategies need to feature the need to, borrowing the words of Wekesa, Steyn and Otieno (2011, p. 60), "foster greater civic and political participation" by building mutual trust and commitment in local development and governance.

The framework might be equally applicable to other developing and transitioning economies that share similar contexts. Specifically for the ACCA programme, the study has, for the first time, thoroughly looked at housing projects in Vietnam. This contribution is important because, although there have been many studies about the programme at a regional level, little has been academically reported about the ones in Vietnam. For such a transitioning context, where tensions between globalization, capitalism and the communism are pronounced and the global-local imperative is intensively magnified, the study suggests opportunities for practices that move beyond the top-down system by mobilizing societal forces to influence the existing institutional system.

My study suggests several areas for future research. As noted above, a study to investigate the application of a holistic approach to social capital formation, mobilization and maintenance in a larger number of cases in similar and/or different contexts would be useful to develop a more generalized theory. This recommendation, if implemented, will usefully enable the development of a more complete social capital conceptual framework that can be used to develop hypotheses for a more comprehensive comparative analysis of social capital operation in a broader scale. For example, this could compare the models of community-based initiatives implemented by different stakeholders in different socio-political contexts and even in different urban governance areas (i.e., housing versus tourism, environmental management versus economic development). A multi-level

governance perspective might be useful for future work on promoting collaboration in local governance issues, particularly in relation to the most vulnerable urban communities. Such research should be accompanied by a more subtle examination of the role (or weight) of the different social capital components between and within different societal levels in initiatives attempted at the local level by individuals, families, and community associations. Alternatively, future research may helpfully evaluate the real impacts of "the network" in promoting community-based actions in a longer time frame. For instance, if the social capital formed through these projects is maintained, will this lead to future community-driven actions, perhaps even of a political nature?

9.3 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the study's process, its main contributions and its limitations and identified areas for future research. In summary, the study proposes a framework that allows an understanding of how different levels of societal resources that form social capital, are mobilized and can be maintained to address local governance issues. On one hand, the study shows that although, the three social capital dimensions are all formed by resources of four different societal levels, they have different inputs, requirements and outputs over the formation, mobilisation and maintenance stages, and that the overall yield is influenced by synergies between the three. The categorization of three distinguishable, separate social capital dimensions, therefore, needs to be revisited. Moreover, the study suggests social capital, though important for a community-based process, necessarily depends on other forms of capital (i.e., human qualities, institutional conditions, organizational status). The existing accounts of social capital are insufficient and need to combine with other lines of relevant theories to explain the occurrence of complex local governance phenomena.

Appendix A

Consent Form

Name of Project: Social capital formation, mobilization and maintenance in a community-based upgrading process: Two case studies of Vietnamese housing upgrading projects

I'm currently conducting research about governance system with the case study of pro poor housing projects in 5 cities of Vietnam. My supervisors are Dr Hamish Rennie and Dr Roy Montgomery from Department of Environment, Faculty of Environment, Society and Design, Lincoln University, New Zealand.

I would like to interview you about your experiences and involvement in the housing projects under Community Development Fund program of the Association of Cities of Vietnam. The interview will take from 45 minutes to 1 hour.

I would like to record the interview so that I can obtain an accurate record of your views. Only my supervisors, Lincoln University Human Ethic Committee and I have access to the tapes and transcripts. Otherwise, I will use note taking to record your interview answers.

I will send you a transcript within one week after the interview that you have to agree with before I am allowed to use the content of the interview, and your feedback is expected to be provided within 3 days since you receive the transcript. The agreement with the transcript or summary validates the data that will be used for academic purposes. Everything you say in the interview will be treated confidentially. That is, if you wish to stay anonymous, your name will not appear on the transcript or in any further publication.

If you have difficulty in signing the consent form, you can use other ways to confirm your agreement, by fingerprint and/or verbal saying if the interview can be recorded.

The results of this research will be reflected in academic articles by me and my supervisors, may be published in academic journals and may be presented at academic conferences.

If you agree to take part in this interview, you have the following rights:

To refuse to answer any particular question, to terminate the interview at any time and to switch off the voice tape recorder at any time.

To ask any further questions about the interview or research project that occurs to you, either during the interview or after.

To remain anonymous, anything that may reveal your identity will not be included in academics articles, conference papers, or any other report about the findings of the research without your explicit consent.

To decide and inform me about the withdrawing of your participation in the research within one month since the interview date.

To ask any question by calling me on 01299007603 or by email: Thuy.Nguyen@lincolnuni.ac.nz

I have read and understood the description of the above-named project. On this basis I agree to participate as a subject in the project, and I consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved. I understand also that I may at any time withdraw from the project, including withdrawal of any information I have provided.

Name:

Signed: _____ Date:

Appendix B

Research Information Sheet

Faculty, Department or Research Centre: Faculty of Environment, Society and Design

You are invited to participate as a subject in a project entitled: Social capital in a community-based upgrading process: two case studies of Vietnamese ACCA housing upgrading projects.

The aim of this project is: To understand the formation, mobilization and maintenance of social relations within and beyond the communities, which influence the collective implementation of ACCA housing projects,

The question of the project is: How do bonding, bridging and linking relations are formed, mobilized and maintained in two Vietnamese ACCA housing upgrading projects?

Your participation in this project will involve:

The interview will take about 45 to 60 minutes. During the interview, the researcher will ask the participants open - ended questions about the conduction of urban poor housing project. The interview will be voluntary and will only be conducted if the participant agrees to be involved.

The researcher will provide the participants with this information sheet, and the consent form before the interview. The participants will be randomly chosen by being every 2nd houses in the neighbourhood or those who the researcher meet by chance when coming to the neighbourhood.

It is better that the researcher can audiotape the interview as it will provide more accurate information to be analysed and will be used for transcription purposes only. If the participant chooses not to be audiotaped, the researcher will take notes instead. If the participant agrees to being audiotaped but feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, the recorder can be turned off at the participant's request. Or if the participant doesn't want to continue, the interview can be stopped at any time.

The researcher also expect to take photo of the participant's housing condition if permitted. The photo will only be used for the research.

As a follow-up to this activity, you will be asked to:

The interview content will then be transcript and sent back to the participant for her/his final agreement before being officially used for research analysis at the latest of one week after the interview. And the participants are expected to provide feedback within 3 days. Within one month, the participant can decide and inform the researcher about their withdrawing from the research.

It is expected to conduct one interview with the participant; however, follow-ups may be needed for clarification. If so, the researcher will contact the participant by email or telephone to ask for further question if she/he is available and willing to help.

The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of your anonymity in this investigation: the identity of any participant will not be made public, or made known to any person other than the researcher, his or her supervisors and the Human Ethics Committee, without the participant's consent. To ensure anonymity the following steps will be taken:

The content of the interview will only be used as data for the thesis analysis, paper publication. The participant's anonymity and confidentiality will be assured meaning that her/his identity will be coded and not be linked to the published information. Only the researcher, her supervisors and HEC will have access to the original information. The entire participant related information, signed consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet or secured digital account. Methods of changing password from time to time with secured notes and keeping the documents in safe and least risky places will be enforced to ensure highest security. No information from those interviews will be shared in any cases apart from those being analysed with coded system in the thesis.

The project is being carried out by: Thuy Thi Thu Nguyen

Contact details : *Thuy.Nguyen@lincolnuni.ac.nz/* Cellphone: 01299007603

I will be pleased to discuss any concerns you have about participation in the project.

Name of Supervisor/Head of Department*/Faculty Dean or Director* :

Hamish Rennie and Roy Montgomery

Contact Details: Hamish.Rennie@lincolnuni.ac.nz, Roy.Montgomery@lincolnuni.ac.nz

The project has been reviewed and approved by the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee.

Appendix C

Interview Guides

C.1 Interview Guide for regional VNCDF team members

Interview background

Name/ Họ và tên	
Title/ Chức danh	
Qualification/ Chuyên ngành	
Organization Cơ quan	
Date/ Ngày tháng	
Location/ Địa điểm	

Brief introduction (see appendix A and B)

Interview guiding questions

1. The operation of VNCDF

How was VNCDF initiated in Vietnam? Its goals, objectives, conditions…

Why was VNCDF transferred to ACVN? What are the differences of VNCDF before and after the transfer?

How do you evaluate the implementation of ACCA projects in Vietnam and the role of VNCDF? And why do you think so? What are influencing factors?

What is the future plan for VNCDF?

2. The case study

When did the project implemented?

How did the project start?

How did the communities involve in the project process?

How was the project introduced to the city and the community?

How was the implemented project introduced to other communities within and outside of the city? What factors do you think are important for this process? (Whose role, what conditions, how to do it effectively?)

Why and how did the city government take part in VNCDF?

Who were involved in the project (from the government (at national, provincial and city level, the national project team, international experts, local experts, the residents…)

What were the challenges during the project implementation?

What were important factors that helped to achieve the project results?

C.2 Interview Guide for national VNCDF team members

Interview background

Name/ Họ và tên	
Title/ Chức danh	
Qualification/ Chuyên ngành	
Organization Cơ quan	
Date/ Ngày tháng	
Location/ Địa điểm	

Brief introduction (see appendix A and B)

Interview guiding questions

1. The operation of VNCDF

How was VNCDF initiated in Vietnam? Its goals, objectives, conditions…

Why was VNCDF transferred to ACVN? What are the differences of VNCDF before and after the transfer?

How do you evaluate the operation of VNCDF? And why do you think so? What are influencing factors?

What is the future plan for VNCDF?

2. The case studies

When and how did the project start and finish?

How did the communities involve in the project process?

What factors influenced the relations among the community members during the project process?

How was the project introduced to the city and the community?

How was the implemented project introduced to other communities within and outside of the city? What factors do you think are important for this process? (Whose role, what conditions, how to do it effectively?)

Why and how did the city government take part in VNCDF? What would you want to change in the operation of ACVN to promote more effective operation of VNCDF?

Did the city government intend to replicate the project city wide?

If the city government were given two projects: one of VNCDF network and one based on the World Bank's official development assistance loan, which one would the city government choose?

Who were involved in the project (from the government (at national, provincial and city level, the national project team, international experts, local experts, the residents…)

What kind of support did the city government put in the project?

How did the relationship between the community and the city government take place?

What were the challenges during the project implementation?

What benefits that you think the project has brought to the city government/ the local communities

What were important factors that helped to achieve the project results?

C.3 Interview Guide for national government agencies' representatives

Interview background

Name/ Họ và tên	
Title/ Chức danh	
Qualification/ Chuyên ngành	
Organization Cơ quan	
Date/ Ngày tháng	
Location/ Địa điểm	

Brief introduction (see appendix A and B)

Interview guiding questions

How were you involved in the VNCDF network? Do you know the ACCA housing projects?

How do you know about ACVN? What's the role of ACVN as the association of the cities of Vietnam?

How do you evaluate the impacts of the implemented ACCA housing projects and their sustainability?

C.4 Interview Guide for city governments' representatives

Interview background

Name/ Họ và tên	
Title/ Chức danh	
Qualification/ Chuyên ngành	
Organization Cơ quan	
Date/ Ngày tháng	
Location/ Địa điểm	

Brief introduction (see appendix A and B)

Briefly cover the information sheet that was given to the respondent in advance via email or directly (see appendix B)

Interview guiding questions

When and how did the city participate in VNCDF network?

When and how did the housing upgrading project start and finish? How was the project introduced to the city and the community?

How did the communities involve in the project process?

What factors influenced the relations among the community members during the project process?

Who were involved in the project (from the government (at national, provincial and city level, the national project team, international experts, local experts, the residents…)

What kind of support did the city government put in the project?

How did the relationship between the community and the city government take place?

What were the challenges during the project implementation?

What benefits that you think the project has brought to the city government/ the local communities

What were important factors that helped to achieve the project results?

Did the city government intend to replicate the project city wide?

How was the implemented project introduced to other communities within and outside of the city? What factors do you think are important for this process? (whose role, what conditions, how to do it effectively?)

If the city government were given two projects: one of VNCDF network and one based on the World Bank's official development assistance loan, which one would the city government choose?

What would you want to change in the operation of ACVN to promote more effective operation of VNCDF?

C.5 Interview Guide for international and national urban experts

Interview background

Name/ Họ và tên	
Title/ Chức danh	
Qualification/ Chuyên ngành	
Organization Cơ quan	
Date/ Ngày tháng	
Location/ Địa điểm	

Brief introduction (see appendix A and B)

Interview guiding questions

What was your role in the project?

How did you know about ACVN and VNCDF?

How did other stakeholders (the local government, the communities, VNCDF staff members) involve in the project process?

How was the project introduced to the city and the community?

What were the challenges during the project implementation?

What benefits that you think the project has brought to the city government/ the local communities

What were important factors that helped to achieve the project results?

C.6 Interview Guide for local communities' members

Interview background

Name/ Họ và tên	
Title/ Chức danh	
Qualification/ Chuyên ngành	
Organization Cơ quan	
Date/ Ngày tháng	
Location/ Địa điểm	

Brief introduction (see appendix A and B)

Interview guiding questions

Why was your project implemented?

How was the project introduced to your community?

When and how did the project start and finish?

How did you and other community members involved in the project process?

What factors influenced the relations among the community members during the project process?

How was the implemented project introduced to other communities within and outside of the city? What factors do you think are important for this process? (whose role, what conditions, how to do it effectively?)

Why and how did the city government take part in VNCDF?

What kind of support did the city government put in the project?

How did the relationship between the community and the city government take place?

What would you want to change in the operation of ACVN to promote more effective operation of VNCDF?

Did the city government intend to replicate the project city wide?

Who were involved in the project? (from the government (at national, provincial and city level, the national project team, international experts, local experts, the residents…)

What kind of support did the city government put in the project?

How did the relationship between the community and the city government take place?

What were the challenges during the project implementation?

What benefits that you think the project has brought to the city government/ the local communities

What were important factors that helped to achieve the project results?

Appendix D

D.1 Figure 3.1: Case study location

Image source: Google, 2015

D.2 Figure 4.6: Asian Coalition of Community Action in Asia

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